



DELHI  
UNIVERSITY  
LIBRARY.

Class 297.

Book No. KII

## DELHI UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Cl No 67

G1

Ae No 25942

Date of release for loan

This book should be returned on or before the date last stamped below. An overdue charge of one anna will be levied for each day the book is kept beyond that date.

---



## **ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION**

***WORKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR***

**THE HOUSE DIVIDED  
INDIA IN THE BALANCE  
TOWARDS ISLAM  
THE SECRET OF EXISTENCE  
THE THRESHOLD OF TRUTH IN ISLAM  
TABLE TALK  
MUSLIM PRAYER  
SAYINGS OF MUHAMMAD  
SOURCES OF CHRISTIANITY  
GLIMPSES FROM THE LIFE OF THE PROPHET  
STUDY OF ISLAM SERIES  
MYSTIC SIDE OF ISLAM  
EXISTENCE OF GOD  
THE IDEAL PROPHET  
REVELATION A NECESSITY  
SERMONS AND ESSAYS ON ISLAM  
RELIGION OF JESUS  
REINCARNATION †  
GOSPEL OF ACTION**

# ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION,

BY

THE KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN

The Imam of The Mosque, Woking

THE WOKING MUSLIM MISSION  
AND LITERARY TRUST  
THE MOSQUE, WOKING

To  
Captain His Highness  
*Ruknuddaula Nusrat-i-Jang Mukhlisuddaula Hafizulmulk*  
Nawab Haji  
Sir Sadiq Mohammad Khan Bahadur Abbasi V  
G.C.I.E., K.C.S.I., K.C.V.O.  
Ruler of Bahawalpur State, India  
as a token of humble expression of my gratitude for  
his keen and generous interest in the welfare  
and work of the Working Muslim  
Mission I respectfully  
dedicate this  
book

*First published in 1931*

## FOREWORD

CERTAIN remarks of some of the European savants against religion in general have moved me to take up my pen once more, though my health is as yet by no means fully restored. These men profess to hold the opinion that religion has done nothing to further the cause of humanity. Rather has it, they say, hindered human progress and caused discord among men. Though events in the West might seem to endorse this view, it is clearly not one borne out by history. It is an admitted fact that, while Western nations were strangers to civilization as long as they remained under the stranglehold of the Church, Muslim nations were at the prime of their culture when they were under the yoke of Islam. Religion, if from God, must come to us for the sole purpose of setting us in the path of progress, and Muslim civilization has been unique in all its phases. It arose among a people and at a time when and where human progress had practically ceased to function. Islam appeared, and with it, almost immediately, a complete transformation, and it was just the teachings of the new faith that worked the miracle. The Arabs were, without exception, the most undesirable portion of humanity in every respect, physical, moral, economical, and political, but they made amazing progress in every way when the Holy Qur-án came to them.

This state of things may perhaps seem a peculiar phenomenon in the history of religion, it may appear to be something in the nature of a new chapter, and yet Islam is a religion, and for whatever it has done it is entitled to claim due credit.



## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

These remarks may strike some as academic in tone, and with no practical bearing on modern conditions, but I see nothing of any practical value in civilization at present of which the origin may not be traced to Islam. Modern civilization has its merits and demerits, and I may say that present-day culture in its desirable phases is only an extension of that to which Islam had already attained.

It is gratifying to note that atheism is on the wane. Belief in God has revived—our scientific researches support that belief—and the time is ripe for religion to prove its necessity if anybody honestly believes in it.

The Qur-án made religion an essential asset to humanity, and I have written this book to substantiate my remarks. I believe that Islam is destined to be the future religion of the whole of the cultured world, if it is properly expounded. I have made this humble attempt for this very purpose, and I pray to God that it may meet with success.

It is our duty as Muslims to enlighten our brethren on this matter.

I could not, however, finish this book as I desired. Many a chapter had to be left out. A portion of the book was published in the pages of the *Islamic Review* and a large number of its readers have asked me to write a Commentary on the Qur-án on the same lines. The suggestion appealed to me strongly. As I thought I could accede to the wishes of my friends, I had to leave this book as it was in order to avoid repetition to a large extent of some of the subjects upon which I shall have to write in the proposed Commentary, especially from the point of view of human civilization and which I should have had to include in the former book, which has, however, not been left defective in this respect. Its last two chapters seem to be very important, seeing that they contain in concise form enough material to satisfy the demands of true culture and civilization. I have not seen in any other

## FOREWORD

work on the subject anything that has not been anticipated in the original contents of those two chapters. This may seem a bold assertion on my part, but I am convinced that it is the case, and I should be grateful to any of my friends who will be good enough to correct me if I am wrong.

I admit that Muslim conditions at present are far from satisfactory, and for obvious reasons, chief among them being our disregard for the Qur-ānic injunctions. When, at the acme of their civilization, extravagance and self-indulgence began to creep into Muslim ways, riches and an easy life brought laziness and lassitude among them, which, aided by Western economic pressure, reduced them to their present state. The character with which a person, as a Muslim, is required to clothe himself has been described in the subject-matter of the two chapters aforesaid. A mere superficial glance at those characters will show that present-day Muslims are sadly lacking in it. This explains the whole situation. These chapters contain no homily on morals. They speak of ethics which can be translated into practice, and I would ask my readers to consider them as they stand in the Qur-ān and the Traditions of the Prophet.

I cannot close these lines without expressing my indebtedness to my Brethren-in-Faith in South Africa. Their liberality is chiefly responsible for these pages seeing the light. It was at their request that I have now commenced a Commentary on the Qur-ān, and I would remind them that charity like theirs could not be better spent than in the service of their religion, which in these days lies chiefly in the distribution of Muslim literature in desirable quarters. I am, however, deeply grateful for the kind reception and hospitality which they accorded Lord Headley and myself when we visited them at their request.

KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN.

AZEEZ MANZIL,

BRANDRETH ROAD, LAHORE.

*February 26, 1931.*



# CONTENTS

	PAGE
FOREWORD . . . . .	v

## CHAPTER I

THE QUR-ÁNIC CONCEPTION OF RELIGION . . . . .	1
---	---

Pre-Islamic conceptions responsible for a feeling of revolt among cultured people, 1—Conception of religion of an anti-rehigionist akin to that of Islam, 2—Belief in God and the logical reasoning of the Qur-án, 2—Islam the creed of the anti-rehigionist, 4—A belief in the life hereafter essential to bring all our faculties to perfection and to control our actions, 6—The six characteristics found in the life of all who preached of the hereafter, 6—Existence of the future life explained, 6-11—The purpose of the Qur-án as distinct from that of the other books, 12—Definition of Islam, 14

## CHAPTER II

RELIGION, CULTURE, AND SCIENCE . . . . .	15
--	----

Why religion is taboo with cultured classes, 15—Material progress due to Islam, 15—Glorification of God only for the perfection of man, 16—A word to the Secularists, 16—Matter, Law, Monism, 18—Science and belief in Allah, 18—Monism and Monotheism in Islam, 19-20—Seven qualities as conceived by the Qur-án in the attributes of *Rabb*, 20-22

## CHAPTER III

THE OBJECT OF DIVINE REVELATION—LIEUTENANCY OF GOD AND HUMAN CIVILIZATION . . . . .	23
--	----

First revelation of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, 23-24—The main object of Divine Revelation is to bring out latent faculties of man, 25-26—The true nature of Divine lieutenancy, 26—The Religion of Commandments and Obedience and the Religion of Expiation and Atonement, 27—The chief features of Islamic conception of religion, 28—Modern civilization examined in the light of the Qur-ánic teaching, 29—The true meaning of the prayer of

# CONTENTS

Jesus, "Thy kingdom come," 30—Capitalism, riches, and crimes, 30—Adventists, the new cosmography, and the traditional belief in the physical ascent of Jesus, 31—Jesus included earth in "God's Kingdom," 32—True happiness consists in the owning of Divine Morals as depicted in the Qur-án, 32-34—The doctrine of the Epiphany opposed to the Laws of Nature, 35—Reasons to believe that Islam is the religion of the future, 36—Sole object of science and revelation is to enlighten us as to what will help us in possessing our birthright, 36—Modernists, 36—Muslims welcome the efforts of the Modernists, 37—The progress of science too slow to afford us a clear view of what the end is to be, hence the necessity of Revelation, 37—The Qur-án declared the position of man to be the vicegerent of God on earth, 38	PAGE 1
--	-----------

## CHAPTER IV

### THE KINGDOM OF GOD ANOTHER NAME FOR TRUE CIVILIZATION

Kingdom of God on earth unattainable unless man possess the requisite qualities of the God of the Qur-an, 40—Excellent ethics impossible to acquire under theologies and philosophies that see no good in the human race, 41—Jesus not responsible for the Church tenets, 42—The Lord's Prayer contradicts the Church tenets, 43—Gratefulness to our Creator widened with the increase of our knowledge, 44—Moral code without some suggestions as to how to bring various gifts of God into human service useless, 45—Why the blessing of God remained unnoticed for thousands of years, 46—Knowledge of nature's secrets, although indispensable, is perilous to human peace if uncontrolled by some moral régime, 46—Deeds after the mind of God the only safeguard, 47—The three essentials of civilization, 47-49—The true meaning of Monotheism, 50—Moral perfection and the conquest of nature, the two highest ideals of our civilization, are unattainable without revelation, 51—Religion as conceived by the Qur-án is the best means for achieving the universal reform, 51—Religious conditions prior to Islam proof of the Divine origin of the message of Muhammad, 52—Some verses of the Qur-án and the traditions of the Prophet emphasizing the use of intellect and importance of knowledge, 53—Christianity did encourage knowledge, 54—From Noah to Jesus no prophet said anything on the acquisition of knowledge, 54—The change the message of Muhammad brought about, 54—A new outlook on life introduced by the Qur-án, 55—The achievements of the Muslims in the domain of science and culture, 56—Religion in the guise of Islam is the greatest benefactor of humanity, 57

## CHAPTER V

### CANKERED CIVILIZATION . . . . . 59

Modern civilization still far from its appointed goal, 59—Why the doctrine of Atonement is immoral, 60—Evils undermining the

# CONTENTS

	PAGE
superstructure of society, 61—Material culture and Christianity failed to stem the increase of evil in Western countries, 62—Muslim society compared with Christian society, 62—The Qur-án not a book of impracticable ethics, 63—Verses dealing with murder and sexual vices, 64—Gambling and drinking, 65—Cheating, fighting, and war, 65—Why the Hague Tribunal has failed in banishing war, 65—Racial prejudice, 66—Unemployment, 66—Usury, 67—Fihal piety, 68—Why Muslims are far less guilty of wrongdoing than non-Muslims, 68	

## CHAPTER VI

ETHICS OF WAR . . . . .	69
-------------------------	----

We need the ethics of war, 69—Human institutions not binding, 70—Followers of Islam win the title of "gentlemen soldiers," 70—Why there was no change in the ruthlessness of Tartars and Huns although they had become Christians, 71—Fighting forbidden in Islam to satisfy the hankering after land or property, 72—Occasions on which Islam permits war, 72—Islam came to establish freedom of conscience, 73—A Muslim is ordered by the Qur-án to protect Christian Churches, 73—Instances of Muslim tolerance, 74—A Muslim forbidden to touch an alien house of worship, 74—A brief survey of the life of Muhammed as an illustration of the ethics of war, 75—Fighting allowed only in self-defence, 75—Verses of the Qur-án dealing with the state of war obtaining during the days of the Prophet Muhammad, 76-78—The allegation contained in the phrase "The sword or Islam" discussed, 79—A few decisive verses on the place of war in Islam, 80

## CHAPTER VII

DIVINE ATTRIBUTES AND HUMAN CHARACTER . . . . .	82
---	----

Excellent Names of God no other than His ways in governing the universe, 82—The aim of the Excellent Names is to make us good citizens, 82—God our exemplar, for His attributes provide us with the highest code of morality, 83—Knowledge referred to by the Qur-án under seven Names of God, 83—The Qur-án suggests nine ways to perfect our necessary knowledge, 84-85—Four ways of contemplation spoken of by the Qur-án, 85-86—The signification of greatness as manifested by the attributes of God, 87-89—Qualities necessary for those in positions of responsibility, 90—Discussion of such Divine attributes as guide us to success in our daily occupations, 91—*Rabb* includes some twenty attributes that operate when God acts as *Rabb* in the universe, 92-94—First five verses of the Holy Qur-án lay down five principles which would carry us to the acme of success, 95—According to Islam the real aim of revelation is to read us lessons that may set our faculties to work, 96—The names of God which inspired the early Muslims to discover the laws of nature which became the bases of the scientific researches of the Muslims, 97—The keynote of the success

# CONTENTS

	PAGE
of the early Muslims, 97—Unchangeability of the laws of God, the basis of all branches of science, emphasized by the Qur-án, 97—Origin of the laws of Gravitation, of Attraction and Repulsion, 99—Origin of the laws of Contraction and of Conservancy, 99— <i>Al-Múhst</i> , <i>Al-Kháhq</i> —the attributes of God—played a most important part in the development of physical science and chemistry, 99—The Divine Attributes " <i>Ar-Rahmán</i> " and " <i>Ar-Rahím</i> ," 100—The cultural state of the world before Islam, 100—The Qur-án responsible for the impetus given by Muslims to the present-day civilization, 101—The two classes of Divine Attributes that assist us socially, 102—Such Divine Attributes as induce us to do good to others, 102—103—Such Divine Attributes as assist us in dealing with those who commit offences, 104—Understanding of the meaning of Divine Attributes essential for the beautifying of our personality, 105—107—Attributes used only in a good sense when spoken of God, 107	

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE DEFINITION AND DIVISION OF THE MUSLIM FAITH 109

For the perfection of our faith some seventy elements of faith are essential, 109—Islam rejects the dogma of "Atonement," 110—Everyone must turn himself to Islam to become a good citizen, 111—Islam, unlike Christianity, encourages a healthy utilizing of our life tendencies, 112—The real signification of *Tauha* (repentance) according to the Qur-án, 112—Fornication a crime next to murder, 113—Concubinage condemned in the Qur-án, 114—Marriage an obligatory institution in Islam, 114—Physical cleanliness, 115—Abstinence from absurd things and idle talk, 115—Abstinence from indecency, pride, vanity, hypocrisy and avarice, distrust, jealousy, conceit, extravagance and niggardliness, exposing certain parts of the body, 116—117—Attainment of knowledge is the duty of a Muslim, 118—The signification of resignation to, and trust in, God in Islam, 118—Idleness is a sin in Islam, 118—Sincerity, 119—What is "Flight"? 119—120—Patience and perseverance, 121—Morals to be observed in family circles, 121—The bringing up of children, 122—The scope of charity in Islam, 122—Faith in God and benevolence towards men the essence of Islam, 123—Meekness, humility, and courtesy, 124—Almsgiving and benevolence to others, 124—The Qur-án systematizes charity, 125—The teaching of knowledge to others, 125—Fair dealing in business, 125—Bearing true witness even against one's own relatives, 125—Verses of the Qur-án dealing with justice, trustworthiness, acts of reform, helping in good actions, giving good advice, forbidding wrong, fulfilment of promises, payment of debts, regard to limits, 126—Verses of the Qur-án dealing with abstinence from injuring others, speaking good words, return of greeting, being just in our profession, giving of loans to those in poverty, charity to neighbours and co-operation, 127—The love of God and the Prophet a constituent of the Muslim faith, 128—Seven verities spoken of in the Qur-án, 129

# CONTENTS

## CHAPTER IX

	PAGE
UNITY OF THE HUMAN RACE . . . . .	131

Religious systems preceding Islam mostly responsible for the inequality of mankind, 131—The theory of transmigration and the sacrament of baptism responsible for hatred in mankind, 132—Every human being according to Islam born free from any taint of sin, 133—Political laws come next to religious laws in creating inequalities in the human race, 133—The principal work of religion is to provide for the comfort of humanity, 134—Muhammad is the greatest of the prophets because of the rules given by him to ensure the freedom of men, 134-135—The aim of the Qur-án is a universal Brotherhood, hence it made Piety the standard of honour of a man 135-136—The four glorious achievements of Islam, 137

## APPENDIX I

ISLAM, RATIONALISM, AND CHRISTIANITY OUR FUTURE ACTIVITIES . . . . .	138
--	-----

By KHWAJA NAZIR AHMAD

## APPENDIX II

THE HOLY QUR-ÁN ON MORAL BUILDING ANGER AND DESIRE . . . . .	147
--	-----

By KHWAJA NAZIR AHMAD





## CHAPTER I

# THE QUR-ĀNIC CONCEPTION OF RELIGION

It is not a matter for surprise if the pre-Islamic conception of religion should have caused a feeling of revolt among cultured people. They think that our passions of hope and fear have led us to believe in the existence of a Deity. We sometimes find our efforts thwarted, and we fail, from unknown causes, to obtain the object of our pursuit, on the other hand, we make gains on other occasions without any effort on our part. In both cases we fail to discover any apparent cause, and are thus led to believe that our welfare and mishaps come to us through agencies beyond our control. Our ignorance, however, ascribes it all to the anger or pleasure of some Unknown Being, Who eventually becomes the object of our worship. We pray to Him for gain, and entreat Him to save us from loss. Indeed, all this occurs to us in pursuance of certain laws working in Nature. They are unchangeable, and are for ever at work. Our ignorance of or our disobedience to them produces all that happens to us, but we erroneously look to some imaginary Deity as the Creator of such vicissitudes in life. Had we discovered all the laws of Nature and respected them, everything would have gone to our satisfaction, and we should have been saved from the burden of religion.

It is, however, interesting to note that the conception of religion propounded by Islam is somewhat akin to what has been argued on the above lines by anti-religionists. The

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

Holy Book speaks of such an Unseen Being as Allah, Who neither needs our worship nor obeisance <sup>1</sup>

His worship, according to the Qur-án, consists in our obeying His laws, which are found in Nature. The whole world seems to be in the hand of a Governor Who administers it under a system of set laws. Laws in Nature compelled Science to believe in the existence of the Unseen. It had, however, to pass through several stages of research before that belief dawned upon its votaries. These laws were evolved to serve some preconceived end. They went in their prescribed course to work out a certain specified design which, working, also evinced marvellous intellect and a vast knowledge of the properties of things, as well as of the proportions in which they become combined under various collocations. But the whole affair did demand a strong ruling hand, Who worked with proprietary rights in them to bring out the desired results. These seven things—Law, Monism, Evolution, Design, Intellect, Knowledge, and Proprietary Command—when observed as working conjointly in the world, could not but establish the existence of the Great Almighty.

Science bowed before God. He was the First Intelligent Cause of Spencer, and the Allah of the Qur-án. The Book made up in this respect a great deficiency existing in the old scriptures. How could we think of God if we had no belief in His existence? We were intelligent beings, and assertive theology held no appeal for us. But the Qur-án repeatedly sets before our intelligent observation various phenomena of Nature that compel the human mind to believe in its Creator. The Book teems with logic and reason in this respect, but I would speak of three things that appeal to me chiefly, besides those I have noted elsewhere.

<sup>1</sup> " And certainly We gave wisdom to Luqman, saying Be grateful to Allah. And whoever is grateful, he is only grateful for his own soul, and whoever is ungrateful, then surely Allah is Self-sufficient, Praised " (Qur-án, xxxi 12).

## THE QUR-ĀNIC CONCEPTION OF RELIGION

(1) The process of creation<sup>1</sup> Things remain appearing and disappearing, they come to existence, and become destroyed after reaching their perfection<sup>2</sup>, they go on automatically on their course and find everything already in existence to meet their wants. The whole process proceeds with mathematical precision and mechanical regularity under a most capable and vigilant supervision. How could it take place without some competent engineer to direct it

(2) There exists a most wonderful relation in everything. All things take attitudes supplementary or complementary towards each other, though they exist in different provinces of Nature. For example, all that descends from the sky in the form of light, heat, etc., would be of no avail if the Earth had not the power of receptivity. She receives them and becomes conceived of innumerable things which she has brought forth

<sup>1</sup> "Read in the name of your Lord who created" "He created man from a clot" "Read and your Lord is Most Honourable" "Who taught (to write) with the pen" "Taught man what he knew not" (Qur-ān, xcvi 1-5)

"Glorify the name of your Lord, the Most High," "Who creates, then makes complete," "And who makes (things) according to a measure, then guides (them to their goal)" (Ibid, lxxxvii 1-3)

"He, Whose is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and Who did not take to Himself a son, and Who has no associate in the kingdom, and Who created every thing, then ordained for it a measure" (Ibid, xxv 2)

"Wonderful Originator of the heavens and the earth! How could He have a son when He has no consort, and He (Himself) created every thing, and He is the Knower of all things!" (Ibid, vi 102)

"Wonderful Originator of the heavens and the earth, and when He decrees an affair, He only says to it, Be, so there it is" (Ibid, ii 117)

<sup>2</sup> "Who created the seven heavens alike, you see no incongruity in the creation of the Beneficent God, then look again, can you see any disorder?" "Then turn back the eye again and again, your look shall come back to you confused while it is fatigued" (Ibid, lxvii 3-4).

"Every one on it must pass away" "And there will endure for ever the person of your Lord, the Lord of glory and honour" (Ibid., lv 26-27)

"And call not with Allah any other god, there is no god but He, every thing is perishable but He, His is the judgment, and to Him you shall be brought back" (Ibid, xxviii 88).

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

gradually to our use. Activity and passivity are always at work everywhere, and relation between things located so distantly from each other could not be a matter of accident.

(3) Man is admittedly a worshipping animal. We crave for an object of adoration: we may bow down before a stone, or prostrate ourselves before the Unseen, but we all respond to a life tendency. Buddhists, with their atheistic bent of mind, pay the same homage to Buddha's images as we do to God. Even an atheist worships Law. If the God of Culture is the God of Law, and we on the other hand cannot avail ourselves of anything without obeying it—nay, we cannot live for a moment without our allegiance to Law—how can we dispense with a creed or code of life that preaches to us the very religion of Nature, the religion of "commandment and obedience"? The Qur-án speaks of the generation of prophets. They appeared from time to time, and brought messages from the Lord to their people. Each and all of them repeatedly enjoined upon mankind one message<sup>1</sup>—to obey Allah, and to worship Rabb—the Creator, Nourisher, Maintainer, and Evolver of the Universe.

The same message has been given to us in the Qur-án. It does not demand from us that we place effigies and images of Allah and Rabb in our shrines and bow down before them, that would be mere mockery. The Muslims no doubt do bow down and prostrate themselves before the Unseen, but that is merely the sign of their willingness to bow down to His Will, the Law of the Atheist. Allah, as the Qur-án says, is the Source of all laws in general, while Rabb frames such laws as are observed by Nature in the creation and maintenance of things, from the first stage up to their perfection. Religion, in its true shape, comes to support some of the said laws, it goads us to their observance. Islam, then, is the creed of the so-called anti-religionist. It is not in our eating

<sup>1</sup> Cf. The Qur-án, vii, sections 9-12.

## THE QUR-ĀNIC CONCEPTION OF RELIGION

and drinking and performance of nuptial rites that all our duties and obligations become exhausted. Animals do the same. We have various faculties in us to be developed, and true civilization lies in their fruition. Some of them develop here, but others remain in abeyance. There must be some life after death to bring all our faculties to perfection. Every one of the blessed race that claimed to have brought the Divine Message to the human race preached of the hereafter, and we find the following characteristics in the lives of all of them:

(1) They speak favourably, and forcibly too, as to the truth of their message—history bears witness to these things.

(2) They all appeared at a time when their people had become demoralized and led a luxurious life that paved the way to destruction.

(3) They held a good social standing, and led a decent life of purity before they spoke of the religion which they preached, and came suddenly to it as though in response to a call.

(4) They did not make a trade of their teaching; they did not ask any remuneration for it. They lost even what they had before—the position as well as occupation of life.

(5) They were successful in the end, to the total discomfiture and even destruction of their adversaries.

(6) They were neither a class of soothsayers nor teachers of dogmatic principles. They spoke in plain language, and their teaching had a direct bearing upon human life. They came with reason and logic, and emphasized a course of life conducive to good here and in the hereafter.

I find the same in the Qur-ān. Muhammad never thought of his personal aggrandisement. The entire Book speaks of logic and reason.<sup>1</sup> It does not tell always of transcendental things, but often preaches simple morality and ethics, which,

<sup>1</sup> "O people! surely there has come to you manifest proof from your Lord and We have sent to you clear light" (Qur-ān, iv. 175).

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

though most necessary, people do not always care to practise. The West is rolling in wealth, but it is lacking in the things that make for permanency. I will quote some simple lessons from the Qur-án, they do not speak of unknown things, but their practice has now, to a great extent, ceased.

Sons in opulence go side by side with the parent in indigence. We often lack things we know not, and it causes trouble. Fornication is the chief curse, the Qur-án not only forbids it, but warns us against our doing such things as may tend to that evil, though they may be the vogue in Society. The Book demands from us, not that we shun this evil only, but that we do not go near it. We do not, doubtless, commit infanticide, but we create the same results in the form of birth-control, to prevent which crime the Qur-án was the first to raise its voice. In short, we do any wrong that is likely to avoid detection, but if we believe in some coming Day of Judgment we must needs cut a different figure.

The whole question turns on the existence of the future life. It is, of course, an intricate problem, but the observation of things around us and the long evolutionary journey which the etherial world has had to travel up to the stage of human consciousness, under the wise guidance of the Originator and Designer, clearly show that the human frame, in its material form, cannot be the final stage of that journey. The Qur-án speaks of it in a most illuminating way, carrying us to the very commencement of the universe. It speaks of the first formation of the heavens and the earth within the seven periods<sup>1</sup> of gradation. Space was then full of vapours<sup>2</sup> and gases,

<sup>1</sup> "He it is who created for you all that is in the earth, and He directed Himself to the heaven, so He made them complete seven heavens, and He knows all things" (Qur-án, ii 29)

"And certainly We made above you seven ways, and never are We heedless of creation" (Ibid., xxiii 17)

"And We made above you seven strong ones" (Ibid., lxxviii 12)

<sup>2</sup> "Then He directed Himself to the heaven and it is a vapour" (Ibid., xli 11).

## THE QUR-ĀNIC CONCEPTION OF RELIGION

when another gaseous matter, hot like fire,<sup>1</sup> that floated in space assumed the form of the earth in its nascent condition.

The heaven and the earth were at that time a closed thing, with various matters in them in a confused and mixed condition. The water then came to open that which was closed. It also brought life on the earth.<sup>2</sup> The earth, as the Book says, was full of quaking in the beginning. The mountains and rocks were created to make it steady. The spaces of the earth had wide ways to enable its future denizens to follow the right course.<sup>3</sup> The space above was similarly decorated with shining lamps to guide them in the darkness.<sup>4</sup> The water came from the clouds in a measure<sup>5</sup> sufficient to move the dead matter.<sup>6</sup> It settled down in the earth and brought forth verdure and vegetation.<sup>7</sup> It made gardens of fruits.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "And the jinn We created before of intensely hot fire" (Ibid , xv 27)

<sup>2</sup> "Do not those who disbelieve see that the heavens and the earth were closed up, but We have opened them, and We have made of water every thing living, will they not then believe?" (Ibid , xxi 30)

<sup>3</sup> "And We have made great mountains in the earth lest it might be convulsed with them, and We have made in it wide ways that they may follow a right direction" (Ibid , xxi 31)

<sup>4</sup> "And We made a shining lamp" (Qur-ān, lxxviii. 13)

"And certainly We have made strongholds in the heaven and We have made it fairseeming to the beholders" (Ibid , xv 16)

<sup>5</sup> "And We send down water from the cloud according to a measure, then We cause it to settle in the earth, and most surely We are able to carry it away" (Ibid , xxiii 18)

<sup>6</sup> "And you see the earth sterile land, but when We send down on it the water, it stirs and swells and brings forth of every kind a beautiful herbage" (Ibid , xxii 5)

<sup>7</sup> (Ibid , xxii 5)

<sup>8</sup> "Then We cause to grow thereby gardens of palm-trees and grapes for you, you have in them many fruits and from them do you eat" (Ibid , xxiii. 19)

"Allah is He who created the heavens and the earth and sent down water from the clouds, then brought forth with it fruits as a sustenance for you, and He has made the ships subservient to you, that they might run their course in the sea by His command, and He has made the rivers subservient to you" (Ibid , xiv 32)

"That We may bring forth thereby corn and herbs" (Ibid., lxxviii. 15).



## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

and flowers, with varieties of grain to serve for our subsistence.<sup>1</sup> It was for this purpose that days and nights were made with alternations in them which moved the winds and brought forth clouds.<sup>2</sup> The winds also floated ships and boats that<sup>2</sup> enriched us with the treasures of the sea. If the days are for enabling us to engage in various occupations in life,<sup>3</sup> the nights are made for our rest<sup>3</sup> and to refresh us for the coming day. The Book also refers to our own creation, and tells how the various products of the Earth became combined under various specializations to evolve the genital seed as her essence.<sup>4</sup> It became located in woman's womb, where it passed through other seven stages of evolution,<sup>5</sup> and gave rise to a new creation—our consciousness.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, the Earth brought forth

<sup>1</sup> "Who made the earth a resting-place for you and the heaven a structure, and (Who) sends down rain from the cloud, then brings forth with it subsistence for you of the fruits, therefore do not set up rivals to Allah while you know" (Ibid, ii 22)

<sup>2</sup> "Most surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the day and the night, and the ships that run in the sea with that which profits men, and the water that Allah sends from the cloud, then gives life with it to the earth after its death and spreads in it all (kinds of) animals, and the changing of the winds and the clouds made subservient between the heaven and the earth, there are signs for a people who understand" (Ibid, ii 164)

"And (in) the variation of the night and the day, and (in) what Allah sends down of sustenance from the cloud, then gives life thereby to the earth after its death, and (in) the changing of the winds, there are signs for a people who understand" (Ibid, xlv 5)

"Allah is He who made subservient to you the sea that the ships may run therein by His command, and that you may seek of His grace, and that you may give thanks" (Ibid, xlv 12)

<sup>3</sup> "And We made the night to be a covering" "And We made the day for seeking livelihood" (Qur-án, lxxxviii 10-11)

<sup>4</sup> "And certainly We created man of an extract of clay" (Ibid., xxxiii 12)

✓ <sup>5</sup> "Then We made him a small life-germ in a firm resting-place" "Then We made the life-germ a clot, then We made the clot a lump of flesh, then We made (in) the lump of flesh bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh, then We caused it to grow into another creation, so blessed be Allah, the best of the creators" (Qur-án, xxxiii. 13-14)

## THE QUR-ĀNIC CONCEPTION OF RELIGION

various cattle for our use and sustenance,<sup>1</sup> and the Book speaks emphatically also of the subservience of the whole of the universe<sup>2</sup> to our needs, and of various other gifts to us, numberless and beyond imagination<sup>3</sup> In short, whatever we may need has already been produced The Designer of the whole scheme, which took Him millions of years to accomplish, must have some true purpose before Him<sup>4</sup> It could

<sup>1</sup> "Allah is He who made the cattle for you that you may ride on some of them, and some of them you eat" "And there are advantages for you in them, and that you may attain thereon a want which is in your breasts, and upon them and upon the ships you are borne" (Ibid , xl 79-80)

"And in your (own) creation and in what He spreads abroad of animals there are signs for a people that are sure" (Ibid , xlv 4)

<sup>2</sup> "Allah is He who created the heavens and the earth and sent down water from the clouds, then brought forth with it fruits as a sustenance for you, and He has made the ships subservient to you, that they might run their course in the sea by His command, and He has made the rivers subservient to you" "And He has made subservient to you the sun and the moon pursuing their courses, and He has made subservient to you the night and the day" (Ibid , xiv 32-33)

"He it is who sends down water from the cloud for you, it gives drink, and by it (grow) the trees upon which you pasture" "He causes to grow for you thereby herbage, and the olives, and the palm-trees, and the grapes, and of all the fruits, most surely there is a sign in this for a people who reflect" "And He has made subservient for you the night and the day and the sun and the moon, and the stars are made subservient by His commandment, most surely there are signs in this for a people who ponder," "And what He has created in the earth of varied hues, most surely there is a sign in this for a people who are mindful" "And He it is who has made the sea subservient that you may eat fresh flesh from it and bring forth from it ornaments which you wear, and you see the ships cleaving through it, and that you might seek of His bounty and that you may give thanks" "And He has cast great mountains in the earth lest it might be convulsed with you, and rivers and roads that you may go aright," "And landmarks, and by the stars they find the right way" "Is He then Who creates like him who does not create? Do you not then mind?" "And if you would count Allah's favours, you will not be able to number them; most surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful" (Qur-ān, xvi section 2)

<sup>3</sup> "And He gives you of all that you ask Him, and if you count Allah's favours, you will not be able to number them, most surely man is very unjust, very ungrateful" (Ibid , xiv 34)

<sup>4</sup> "Most surely in the heavens and the earth there are signs for the believers" (Ibid , xlv. 3)

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

not have been all in vain <sup>1</sup> It was all made as though for the purpose of receiving and accommodating some person of dignity.<sup>2</sup> This person was no other than man himself—God's own vicegerent.<sup>3</sup> The Book came to raise him, and exalt him to that state of honour <sup>4</sup> If we had to live on the earth only for sixty or seventy years and then cease utterly to be, would it not then have been mere sport on the part of God <sup>5</sup> our Lord? Was this much ado in vain? <sup>6</sup> It must be purposeful as every other thing in His creation shows, which purpose could not be materialized unless there be continuity of our life, when we shall make further progress in the realms beyond the grave. The Qur-án speaks repeatedly of the life after death. It makes it an article of faith for us The Book also makes mention of the various grades <sup>7</sup> of evolution through which we have to pass, and these grades have been styled by it "the seven heavens" Had we been labouring under the old mode of thinking, like an atheist, taking the creation of the universe and its components as a matter of accident, we could say (as the Qur-án quotes the unbelievers as saying) that there is

<sup>1</sup> "He created the heavens and the earth with the truth, highly exalted be He above what they associate (with Him)" (Ibid, xvi 3)

"And we did not create the heaven and the earth and what is between them for sport" (Ibid, xxi 16, xlv 38)

<sup>2</sup> "And surely We have dignified the children of Adam, and We carry them in the land and the sea, and We have given them of the good things, and We have made them to excel, by a (high) degree of excellence, most of those whom We have created" (Ibid, xvii 70)

<sup>3</sup> "And when your Lord said to the angels, I am going to place in the earth one who shall rule (in it), they said What! Wilt Thou place in it such as shall make mischief in it and shed blood, and we celebrate Thy praise and extol Thy holiness? He said Surely I know what you do not know" (Ibid, ii 30)

<sup>4</sup> "And exalted for you your eminence" (Ibid., xciv 4)

<sup>5</sup> "And We did not create the heaven and the earth and what is between them for sport" (Ibid, xxi 16, xlv 38)

<sup>6</sup> "He created the heavens and the earth with the truth, highly exalted be He above what they associate (with Him)" (Ibid, xvi 3)

<sup>7</sup> "That you shall most certainly enter one state after another" (Qur-án, lxxxiv 19)

## THE QUR-ĀNIC CONCEPTION OF RELIGION

nothing but our life in this, we live and die, and nothing destroys us but time and accident. But Science has now revolutionized our convictions, we look at everything from a different angle, we see design everywhere, and every substance is ruled by unchangeable laws, we look to man as a "mighty atom" on the earth. His creation seems to us to have been designed from the very commencement of the nebular world which is still developing into the organized kingdom<sup>1</sup>, nay, numerous other things came into existence even before the nebular world, to work out the said Design. Was it all a matter of sport if we had only to live for a brief space of time and then to disappear for ever? That is to give the lie to the Creator of the Universe, and to find fault with Nature that seems so perfect and free from all flaw.<sup>2</sup> Then, how about the various products of the earth, say in the form of fruits, flowers, and cattle, that exist for our exclusive use? They took thousands of years before they were ready for us to use, was it all only for a creation that came but to eat, drink, and be merry, and that again for such a little while when compared with the age of the universe? It would be an insult to our intelligence if we were so to believe. There must be a great future before us, and this short life of ours has been given to us as a period of preparation before we enter into the vast realm of wonderful possibilities and probabilities. How gracious of God, the Most Merciful Lord, to shorten our stay here and hasten our entering into eternal bliss!

I should recommend my readers to read in this connection the first section of chapter lxxviii, as well as lxxx 24-42, xxxii. 12-16, lxxvi. 5-7, and xxii 5 of the Qur-ān.

The present, in every sphere, is admittedly the mother of the future. The welfare or the trouble of the coming days

<sup>1</sup> "And certainly We made above you seven ways, and never are We heedless of creation" (Ibid, xxiii 17)

<sup>2</sup> "Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth declares the glory of Allah, the King, the Holy, the Mighty, the Wise" (Ibid, lxi. 1).

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

must depend upon our present actions. We are in another embryonic condition here, and have to be born in other regions beyond the grave. If good conditions of a womb-life bring forth a healthy child, we are again in a new womb for the hereafter. If all the faculties inherent in all other things cannot remain without coming to the surface, and they change their conditions and environments to achieve that end, our case also must be the same. Those of our faculties that do remain latent here in this life must have some future life and new environment for their growth, otherwise the whole scheme of creation, as far as we are concerned, is missed. Consciousness exists in the vegetable kingdom, but it comes into prominence when transferred to the human body. So will be the growth of our various occult powers in the coming world.

If the Lord of Nature has given a code of life to all things in Nature for their thriving in the form of their respective instincts, and the said code acts for them as their religion, the Qur-án brings us that religion for our guidance, as we do not find any instinct of knowledge in us. We have a capability to acquire knowledge, but we do not bring it from the womb; we cannot distinguish between the beneficial and the baneful by instinct as the rest of Nature does, we have to learn the required knowledge. The world was not without its revelations from God for this purpose at the advent of the Prophet, but these had lost their original purity at that time. The Qur-án therefore came to confirm knowledge already received, but it differed from the other scriptures in spirit and in form. It was neither a treatise on ritualism, like the Ríg Veda, the Hindu Sacred Book, nor was it a tribal record, like the Bible. It spoke of ceremonial piety, and declared it only a means<sup>1</sup> to attain higher ends. It narrated

<sup>1</sup> "O you who believe! fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard (against evil)" (Qur-án, II 183)

"Recite that which has been revealed to you of the Book and keep

## THE QUR-ĀNIC CONCEPTION OF RELIGION

certain historical events, but only to illustrate some of the principles it inculcated.

The Book came to help us in bringing our faculties to perfection. It came to make us the ideal man. It did not come to teach us to exalt the Deity by repeating words in praise of Him. He stands beyond all human praises,<sup>1</sup> but it was sent, at its revelation, to elevate a humanity which bordered on animality. The Word of God came to raise that humanity nearer to the Divine. Islam was not preached to exact from us any adoration for God in the current sense of the word, but it taught us that His Adoration is to remind us of that ideal state of life that befits us as His lieutenants on earth. Our attention is not drawn to His grandeur and beauty because they are His, but we are told of them in order to possess them ourselves.

In His different attributes, as stated in the Qur-ān, we are given an insight into that Divine Resplendence that should

up prayer, surely prayer keeps (one) away from indecency and evil, and certainly the remembrance of Allah is the greatest, and Allah knows what you do " (Qur-ān, xxix 45)

" There is no blame on you for seeking bounty from your Lord, so when you hasten on from 'Arafāt, then remember Allah near the holy monument, and remember Him as He has guided you, though before that you were certainly of the erring ones " (Ibid , ii 198)

" That they may witness advantages for them and mention the name of Allah during stated days over what He has given them of the cattle quadrupeds, then eat of them and feed the distressed one, the needy " (Ibid , xxii 28)

" Alms are only for the poor and the needy, and the officials (appointed) over them, and those whose hearts are made to incline (to truth) and the (ransoming of) captives and those in debt and in the way of Allah and the wayfarer an ordinance from Allah, and Allah is Knowing, Wise " (Ibid , ix 60)

" Take alms out of their property, you would cleanse them and purify them thereby, and pray for them, surely your prayer is a relief to them, and Allah is Hearing, Knowing " (Ibid , ix 103).

<sup>1</sup> " And certainly We gave wisdom to Luqman, saying Be grateful to Allah. And whoever is grateful, he is only grateful for his own soul, and whoever is ungrateful, then surely Allah is Self-sufficient, Praised " (Ibid , xxxi 12).

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

also halo us. No doubt we have to keep Him always before us, but in glorifying Him we have also to think of the ideal of **man** in us. Our glorification of the Lord must consist in our edification to Divine Glory. The Qur-án declares this to be the objective of <sup>1</sup> religion it teaches, while it calls it Islam <sup>2</sup> in its subjective form. Islam means our following such laws as would help us to cultivate our faculties so that they attain their best growth. For this reason the Book makes mention of the Hundred Names of God. These attributes refer to His ways of work in Nature, and have been revealed to us that we may make them our prototype.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "And the same did Abraham enjoin on his sons and (so did) Jacob. O my sons! surely Allah has chosen for you (this) faith, therefore die not unless you are Muslims" (Qur-án, ii 132)

<sup>2</sup> "Forbidden to you is that which dies of itself, and blood, and flesh of swine, and that on which any other name than that of Allah has been invoked, and the strangled (animal) and that beaten to death, and that killed by a fall and that killed by being smitten with the horn, and that which wild beasts have eaten, except what you slaughter, and what is sacrificed on stones set up (for idols) and that you divide by the arrows, that is a transgression. This day have those who disbelieve despaired of your religion, so fear them not, and fear Me. This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favour on you and chosen for you Islam as a religion, but whoever is compelled by hunger, not inclining wilfully to sin, then surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful?" (Ibid., v 3)

<sup>3</sup> See *Islamic Review* for February 1931, for a detailed discussion on the point

## CHAPTER II

### RELIGION, CULTURE, AND SCIENCE

RELIGION is not at present in the good books of what is commonly called "culture," and for obvious reasons. The Religion of Law, which had at one time a direct appeal to the human mind, has given way to Ceremonialism, and the Religion of Grace is merely a Religion of Sacraments—admittedly a replica or relic of Paganism. It is not a matter for surprise, then, if both forms of religion have failed to find favour with men of reason and learning.

The days of religion, they think, are over. In their judgment religion is a back number, and should be shelved and forgotten, because it has nothing at all in common with present-day requirements. We have become saddled with new needs, we discover in ourselves new aptitudes, we feel aspirations not known before, the range of our tastes has also become widened. Religion was a necessity once upon a time when the worshipping tendency in us predominated over our sense of utility. But inasmuch as religion is of no service to us under modern conditions, but rather a persistent hindrance in the way of progress, it is high time that it should be discarded by human society.

Prima facie this would seem to be a plausible case against religion, but Islam falsifies it completely. Religion in general has, no doubt, been unable to keep pace with science, but that fulcrum of our progress owes its very existence to Islam; for the first principle of progress—the subservience of Nature to man—was not only promulgated by the Qur-án but



## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

became an article of faith with us for the guidance of our activities.

Everything in the dumb and unconscious world is on the right path to perfection. It has been set on that path by the First Intelligent Cause, and brings forth gradually all that it has to bring. Man, the supreme achievement of Creation, could not be left without this guidance. The reasonable attitude on such subjects acknowledges him as one supplied with infinite capacities. But for thousands of years most of the forces reposed in man remained in abeyance. Modern research has brought us to material progress, but it has also increased the measure of human misery that has been clouding humanity's progress from the very beginning, and that is because the moral forces hidden in us have had no chance of development. So we see that man is in dire need of the same guidance on the plane of consciousness which has been given to other occupants of the universe. Design has now been universally admitted to be a salient feature of the whole creation, but that same design somehow seems to have missed fire in the case of man. Man appears to surpass the whole of nature in his possession of wonderful capacities, but he is groping in the dark. The Hand behind the scene is guiding everything to its goal. If He is so far providing for the body, can He remain indifferent to the mind? Revelation from on High should surely concern itself with the latter. It is no question of simply glorifying God with our lips—He has no need of such perfunctory praise. His glory lies in the accomplishment of the object which He had in mind in creating all things in the world, including man.

But here I have a word to spare for the Secularist. Even an atheist cannot dispense with Law, he is as much its slave as others are, so I ask him first to disabuse his mind of all that he has hitherto thought or heard of religion in general, and consider the case of Islam for awhile. He himself is not

## RELIGION, CULTURE, AND SCIENCE

without a creed, which is none other than the Religion of Obedience to Law. Islam literally means just that, though, technically, it signifies Divine Laws, which in their turn have been styled in scientific terms Laws of Nature. A mere difference in phraseology should not disturb a mind which is free from bias, if the two words mean the same thing. Such a mind may regard God and Divine Laws, so often spoken of in these pages, as a substitute for Nature and Natural Laws. It may do the same in the case of the Divine attributes to which I will refer in this book. It may look to them as morals exhibited by Nature, and then judge for itself whether the message given by the Qur-án was not the one we needed most for the justification of our very existence on the earth. The Qur-án came to lift us to the height of civilization in all the pursuits of life. It was the first Book to define the real constituents of human civilization and to teach us how to achieve it. The Muslims remained in possession of it for about one thousand years, but lost it when they ceased to follow the said laws through idleness caused by luxury.

I also ask the adherents of other religions to see for themselves whether the laws cited in these pages from the Qur-án are not designed to perfect human happiness here as well as in the world to come. This ought to be the sole object of every civilization and religion, for it consists chiefly in two things: first, in reducing all the forces of Nature to our service, as Science is doing now, and secondly, in the observance by us of the highest moral standards.

These observations might not succeed in inducing a biased mind to realize that a Revealed Book is defective if it does not draw man's attention to Nature and urge him to explore its provinces, and there cannot be much point in a Revealed Book which fails to do so. The good so often claimed for religion—i.e. that of the maintenance and establishment of moral order in human society—is a thing which man has

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

adopted voluntarily under the pressure of his own social environment. A thinking mind cannot nowadays deny the service that science has rendered to the cause of religion. If belief in the Deity has been universally the *sine qua non* of religion from time immemorial, actual faith itself has been sadly in decay in our days. Science came to its rescue when modern culture was fast banishing it to oblivion. The former provided a real panacea for saving the latter when it was breathing its last in the West. It was on a retreating campaign, driven back before the ever-increasing onslaughts of secularizing agents, that appeared in the forms of scepticism, agnosticism and positivism. (The last, though a truth, was based on wrong scientific data.) Atheism was in full swing when a sudden discovery checked its course. Biology, a century before, could find no purpose whatsoever in the working of Nature. Its freaks and blunders, as they were then thought to be, had brought the various manifestations of Nature into existence. But scientific research in the universe discovered that there were governing principles which it called Order and Law. The so-called freaks and blunders in the light of new discoveries appeared various ordered phases of an organized system. The preponderance of Law, and obedience to it, was seen in every stage in the progress of every created thing. It was not the dead matter of former biology, with no scheme before it, but something that evinced a character of Law-abidingness, even in its most nebular form. Obedience to Law was taken as its inherent quality. To avoid, therefore, the associations that the word "Matter" created in the human mind under the teachings of the old-fashioned biology, a new name was proposed that might comprehend this significant attribute in the things of the world. The name chosen was "Law substance," meaning something that assumed shape in order to answer the demands of the Law. Its supremacy in Nature became thus established. But it was also found

## RELIGION, CULTURE, AND SCIENCE

that the said Law was a curious collection of antitheses. Each form of it prescribed a course antagonistic to the requirements of the other. Heterogeneity was everywhere, though it gave way in the long run to homogeneity. Conflicting elements worked in harmony to attain one end, a phenomenon which compelled biologists to believe in the working of "One Hand" that ruled Nature and brought its contrasts into concord. This state of affairs created a new creed that received the name of Monism, and further researches established the fact that all the activities of the Law-substance under Monism also disclosed some Design. Everything was bringing forth some specified object. The various components of the universe stood either in a supplementary or complementary relation to each other, and all this was no mere accident, but in order to fulfil the requirements of a set Design. It also appeared that the accomplishment of the Design was not to be furthered in a haphazard way, for there was evinced intelligence, together with the premeasurement and the prearrangement of the requisites so necessary for perfection. All those observations established another great truth. Evolution was the order of the day. Everything, from its initial form up to completion, was pursuing an evolutionary course, and brought forth gradually all the qualities that had been reposed in it at its very creation. Science thus led us step by step to believe in Law, Monism, Design, Intelligence, and Evolution as the chief indications of the Working Hand, Whose owner also appeared to possess complete knowledge of things with absolute power to rule over them and bend them to His Will. Consequently belief in the existence of the Great Mind was confirmed, and the world began to adore the God of Nature, called "Allah" in the Holy Qur-án.

Monism is now an accepted verity in secular opinion, but there is yet a small gulf to be bridged between Monism and Monotheism. Now if we credit this Working Hand, of which

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

we have spoken, with Intelligence and Design, as science compels us to do, we must needs believe in the existence of some mind that works wonders everywhere, since these features belong exclusively to mind. Monism plus belief in Mind's existence will create Monotheism.

Unfortunately Dogmatic Theology gave such attributes to the Creative Agency that it failed to receive any support from the school of Natural Theology, nay, the former was regarded by many as an insult to human intelligence. The revolt was especially directed against the assertiveness of the Formal Church in the West, and disbelief in God was its necessary outcome. Had it referred to the above qualities as the attributes of the Supreme Being, it could have suppressed all atheistic tendencies in humanity. Al-Qur-án, however, adopted the required course. The very first attribute that it gave to Allah—i.e. *Rabb*—includes the seven qualities. Besides, the sacred Book, in many verses, refers to those qualities as salient characteristics of One Who created the universe, thus establishing His existence in a most rational way. It is for this reason that Muslims became more firmly fixed in their belief in Islamic tenets in consequence of the spread of Liberal Education, while other faiths suffered everywhere from its hands.

Here I give a few of the verses referring to the seven qualities to which I have alluded. The Book teems with such, and they will be discussed later on.

(1) Preponderance of laws that receive obedience from everything in Nature.—“Is it then other than Allah's religion that they seek (to follow), and to Him submits whoever is in the heavens and the earth, willingly or unwillingly, and to Him shall they be returned ”<sup>1</sup>

(2) Monism.—“If there had been in them any gods except

<sup>1</sup> Holy Qur-án, iii. 82.

## RELIGION, CULTURE, AND SCIENCE

Allah, they would both have certainly been in a state of disorder, therefore glory be to Allah, the Lord of the dominion, above what they attribute (to Him) " <sup>1</sup> The verse in a very brief form refers to the nature of the laws working in Nature and antagonistic to each other in their requirements. Such were sure to create chaos in the universe, had they not been under the control of one hand

(3) Design — " O men! serve your Lord Who created you and those before you *so that you may guard* (against evil)." <sup>2</sup> " He it is who created *for you* all that is in the earth, and He directed Himself to the heaven, so He made them complete seven heavens, and He knows all things." <sup>3</sup> It shows the object of the creation and the things therein. " And We did not create the heaven and the earth and what is between them in *vain*, that is the opinion of those who disbelieve, then woe to those who disbelieve on account of the fire." <sup>4</sup> The words italicized by me refer to the designs and object of the creation

(4) Design and intelligence and Monism — " And your God is *one God*! there is no god but He, He is the Beneficent, the Merciful " " Most surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day, and the ships that run in the sea with that which *profits men*, and the water that Allah sends down from the cloud, then gives life with it to the earth after its death and spreads in it all (kinds of) animals, and the changing of the winds, and the clouds made subservient between the heaven and the earth, there are signs for a people *who understand*." <sup>5</sup> The verses show how various units in the universe, though belonging to various regions and working separately as regards each other in their own sphere, do converge to the same end, i e. "profit of man " And the whole system displays an intelligent design.

<sup>1</sup> Holy Qur-án, xxi. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, ii. 29.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, xxxviii. 27.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, ii. 21.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., ii. 163-64.

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

(5) Evolution —“Pharaoh said And who is the one whom you call your Rabb. He said Our Rabb is He who gave to everything its shape, measure, and quantity of materials to bring it to its perfection and then put it on the right path to reach the goal ” “ (Pharaoh) said And who is your Lord, O Moses? He said Our Lord is He Who gave to everything its creation, then guided it (to its goal) ” <sup>1</sup> The verse refers to all the evolutionary stages

(6-7) Knowledge of things and power like that of an owner rule over them. “. . . whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His, who is he that can intercede with Him but by His permission? He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they cannot comprehend any thing out of His knowledge except what He pleases, His knowledge extends over the heavens and the earth, and the preservation of them both tires Him not, and He is the Most High, the Great.” <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Holy Qur-án, xx. 49-50

<sup>2</sup> Ibid , ii 255

## CHAPTER III

# THE OBJECT OF DIVINE REVELATION—LIEUTENANCY OF GOD AND HUMAN CIVILIZATION

“ READ in the name of your Lord [Rabb] who created. He created man from a clot Read and your Lord [Rabb] is most honourable, Who taught to write with the pen, Taught man what he knew not ” (Holy Qur-án, xcvi 1-5).

Such were the words that came to Muhammad in a voice like thunder as he lay alone in the cave of Hira, near Mecca, lost in contemplation, with a soul sick unto death and in despair for the universal evil that seemed in his time to have darkened the whole atmosphere of the world and to have reached its culminating point in Arabia. Corruption was rife all over the world before his advent. “Death—mental, moral, and spiritual—had overtaken the human race, and darkness prevailed everywhere, clouding the beliefs and perverting the actions of the people ” Religions had, one and all, lost their healthy influence on the lives of their adherents. “ The Christianity of the Seventh Century was itself decrepit and corrupt ”<sup>1</sup> The Holy Qur-án thus briefly describes the conditions of that period. “ Corruption has appeared in the land and the sea, of what the hands of men has wrought ” (xxx 40).

The words were spoken by a Mighty Form, an Archangel, says the Holy Prophet. Let materialists, if they will, regard it as a vision resulting from the Prophet’s imagination; yet



## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

unless he was possessed of quite unusual imagination accompanied by supernatural foresight, materialists must be in error; since events that were presently to come completely disproved such theories. For the Revelation vouchsafed to the Holy Prophet was to be most clearly fulfilled. The sacred words not only foretold the great honour that was in store for the human race, the time for which had then arrived, but they also spoke of the one remedy that could avail to save it from the poison that was sapping its very life. The Revelation declared that the shape in which matter had become evolved in the human frame was not the final stage of its progress. It had no doubt reached finality in its material journey, but this finality was but the starting-point of coming stages in human advancement. The physical nature of man had given birth to something new<sup>1</sup>—human consciousness, something differing in its vastness and other capabilities from anything to be detected in other animals. It in fact furnished a nucleus for further progress on the mental, moral, and spiritual planes.

In this connection the sacred words speak also of an attribute of God—that is to say, Rabb. The Arabic word that has not been properly translated by the word "Lord," for want of a better rendering in English, does not only mean "creator," but signifies also the endowing with various capacities of everything in creation, and "the fostering of it in such a manner as to make it attain one condition after another until it reaches its goal of completion"<sup>2</sup>. The same Rabb

<sup>1</sup> "And certainly We created man of an extract of clay, Then We made him a small life-germ in a firm resting-place, Then We made the life-germ a clot, then We made the clot a lump of flesh, then We made (in) the lump of flesh bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh, then We caused it to grow into another creation" (Holy Qur-án, xxiii 12-14)

<sup>2</sup> Muhammad 'Alí, in his English translation of the Qur-án, quoting from Imán Rāghib's dictionary of the Qur-án, which was written centuries before the theory of Evolution was started by Darwin and continued by Herbert Spencer

## THE OBJECT OF DIVINE REVELATION

who, according to this Revelation, evolved a physically perfect creation like man out of a clot of blood, now intended to give him further privileges that would come to him through a new learning to be attained by him through the power to read and write. The subsequent Revelations explained the above position in clearer terms when they said "And when your Lord [Rabb] said to the angels, I am going to place in the earth one who shall rule (in it) . . . And He gave Adam knowledge of all the things, then presented them to the angels . . . And when We said to the angels, Make obeisance to Adam, they did obeisance" (Holy Qur-án, ii. 30, 31, 34)

The prayer of Jesus found its response from the Lord, some six hundred years later, in the revelations of Muhammad. The former prayed for the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth, while it was revealed to the latter that the time had come when man shall be shown such things as will enable him to rule the earth as God's Vicegerent. The above quotation also hinted at the means, fully set out later on in the Qur-án, by which this grand object was to be achieved. The angels, who according to Islamic teaching are the sentient beings which bring all forces of nature into operation, were ordered to pay homage to him and minister to his wishes, but he had first to acquire "knowledge of all the things" in the universe, after which the movers of natural forces would obey him in actualizing the potentialities inherent in creation. The Qur-án also revealed that the things in nature, as has been said before, were not purposeless, but had all been designed for his service and benefit, and that he had been equipped with the capacities necessary for working out this design (xxxviii. 27).

This was the main object of Divine Revelation, the object for which, according to Qur-ánic teaching, Religion was given to man. Its purpose was to bring out his latent faculties,

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

and carry him to the height of material, moral, and spiritual prosperity and happiness

I cannot understand how what calls itself Culture can conceivably take exception to a religion which came primarily for the very purpose which Culture itself professedly sets out to achieve. That purpose is to educate the human race to a civilization which will enable it to rule Nature on the morally highest principles—a proceeding which alone can serve to alleviate the misery and unhappiness which till now have deprived man of much of the means for happiness at his disposal. Man in these days partially commands riches and wealth, but this affluence has in effect but added the more to his misery. The sad conditions that obtain all over the world to-day have arisen from the lack in us of that high morality which the working of God exhibits in Nature. The Divine lieutenancy spoken of in the above sacred words cannot become complete unless man brings forth a good moral and spiritual harvest keeping pace with his material progress. “The vicegerency of God” spoken of in the Qur-án, or “Thy kingdom come . . .” is not the dream of a religious crank. Its materialization, according to Islam, means that the achievement of that civilization lies in a study of the condition that obtains in the realm of Nature, where things necessary for our happiness are always in process of creation, and then are distributed in us according to our merits, but mostly on principles of broadmindedness. When man shall have come to work on these lines he will become God’s Viceroy on earth. Even the Secularist could not take exception to it, if he looked at the question merely from the point of view of utility. Capitalism, or Socialism—now known as Communism—or any other system without desirable morals, cannot remedy the prevailing evil. Everything in Nature, except man, is happy and content. Man, the image of God, is labouring under misfortune in this respect, but he can

## THE OBJECT OF DIVINE REVELATION

easily avoid it if he will endeavour to possess himself of those morals and ethics which the Most High manifests in the universe.

An atheist may not believe in the existence of the Moral Ruler, though modern scientific research has brought him nearer to Monotheism, but he cannot, with all his sceptic tendencies, fail to observe generally intellect accompanied by liberality and compassion in the working of Nature. The Muslims ascribe all this to the Being they call Rabb, and supposing that supreme Moral Ruler to exist, we could banish evil and misery from human society if we were content to walk humbly with Him. This again I say is the chief object of Religion. All other aspects of it which unfortunately have tended to monopolize human devotion are mere accessories, though some of them are essential means towards achieving the end. It is true that Religion has recently lost much ground. Though it is regaining it since the Great War, it is still treated as a back number by a large section of cultured people. It is not really wanted. That may fairly be termed the general position in the West. But the blame for this must be laid at the door of Religion by reason of the form it has generally been content to assume.

Religion, as I said before, has come to man in two forms from time immemorial—the Religion of Commandments and Obedience, and the Religion of Expiation and Atonement. The former could appeal to reason and intelligence, since the rule of Law and Obedience permeates the whole of Nature and success lies in its observance. But unfortunately this aspect of Religion has, as Religion, been looked at askance, so that it has become merged in Ceremonialism—the spirit lost and the letter worshipped. It has ceased therefore to command any respect from those who respect reason and look for utility in every pursuit. As to the Religion of Atonement, its tenets can only be accepted by the mutilation or total disregard of intelligence. Church dogma in the West is its

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

our activities. We have to ransack the other stores of Nature if we wish to perfect our civilization. We have still to make discoveries concerning innumerable components of the world. They are all made for the use of man, so the Qur-án taught us centuries ago, and goaded us to find out ways that might enable us to bring them to our service. Here again we shall have to walk humbly with the Lord. If all these phenomena are the work of Rabb (God), as the Qur-án says, the Book simply disclosed a truism when it declared that the object of creating man was to send him as His vicegerent on earth. The Book therefore gave him a religion under which he should become dyed in the colours of God, which means that he should act on earth as his Lord does in Heaven. This is what Jesus meant when he prayed, "Thy Kingdom come, on earth as it is in Heaven."

I have already remarked that with all our material achievements, misery and pain are still with us. Even those rolling in wealth wear a veritable mask which conceals pain possibly more poignant than that experienced by the victims of poverty, which clearly shows that Capitalism is no remedy. Capitalism cannot perfect our happiness. Besides the personal troubles of those in opulence, riches induce crime in its various forms—theft, cheating, deception, fornication, prostitution, and other cognate evils. Neither is Communism the true alternative, for it kills every incentive for effort and hard work. If our earnings go to constitute national estate, and we are deprived of their ownership and only allowed a pittance out of our acquisitions for our own maintenance, it is sufficient to damp all our zeal in the making of wealth. Thus both Capitalism and Communism as they are understood to-day do no good to the human race, excluding each other as they do from their respective provinces. What we do need is a happy coalition of certain good principles in each of them. Ownership can only induce us to strain our nerves

## THE OBJECT OF DIVINE REVELATION

in the acquisition of wealth. But it needs, further, a liberal distribution among poorer men if we are to banish misery.

In short, we do need to follow Divine attributes in the creation and distribution of wealth, which is the condition precedent for soaring to the higher regions of the Divine Realm.

"Thy Kingdom come" is the pith of the prayer popularly known as the Lord's Prayer. Jesus longed for the establishment of God's Will on earth, as it was in Heaven, for in this he saw the establishment of the Heavenly Kingdom. His prayer still resounds in every corner of Christendom. Two thousand years have all but passed, and still that prayer has failed to receive any response, according to the Church's interpretation, which identifies the prayed-for Kingdom with the descent of Jesus from on high. The recent disappointment of the Adventists in this respect, together with the new cosmogony which has lately arisen, tends to discredit the old beliefs. The researches of Science have destroyed the Church's map of the universe. The earth is now believed to be but an insignificant speck in infinite Space. No one now takes the universe for a "three-storied building consisting of heaven, the abode of God, the angels and beatified spirits, our earth; and the infernal regions beneath it." The descent of Christ into Hades and his ascent into Heaven must therefore be taken in an allegorical sense, as is the practice with the most prominent Churchmen.

Astronomical truth, as accepted at present, leaves no room for a geographical Heaven. The new cosmography thus destroys faith in the physical ascent of Jesus, and with it goes the belief in his descent. Church dignitaries are now realizing the futility of such doctrines and see his second coming in the exhibition of Divine Morals by man. The Kingdom of Heaven will come and rule the earth when man, the lord of the earth,

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

shall have decked himself in Divine Garments. Jesus, in fact, prayed for the day when the King of Heaven will reveal His Morals to humanity. Man then will walk humbly with the Lord, and His Will be on earth as it is in Heaven.

Jesus could never have thought that the earth was not included in God's Kingdom. Every thing in the earth and on it, as far as its material growth is concerned, slavishly follows the Laws of God.<sup>1</sup> Man no doubt is a rebel against His Government, and that chiefly where he follows his own discretion, otherwise he cannot afford to go against the Laws of God. Even atheists bow to them, though the atheist calls them the Laws of Nature. The Divine Economy has blessed man with the power of discernment. He errs in its use, and becomes inordinate in his ways. Jesus, a true reformer from God, saw the real uplifting of man in his coming under the Divine Colours. True baptism does not consist of dipping in water. This is just a symbol. It consisted, as the Qur-án afterwards explained, in dyeing oneself in the colours of God.<sup>2</sup>

The world, with all our concern in it, is a chaos if not subservient to moral order. There is no tranquillity or peace of mind anywhere in the human world, while both these qualities are clearly to be observed in all other denizens of the universe, be they animate or inanimate, whether they possess intelligence or lack it. Ethics based on true morality can alone finish this ever-increasing struggle between man and man which is disturbing the human mind everywhere. Possession of earthly riches, though essential constituent of our comfort, does not secure for us the treasure of real happiness. This latter lies exclusively in the owning and exhibition of Divine Morals. For these we look in sacred scriptures and in the writings of great men. But our prejudices and passions handicap us here. We very often object to such moral tenets as come from other teachers. Fortunately the true solution

<sup>1</sup> Holy Qur-án, xxx 30

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., ii 138.

## THE OBJECT OF DIVINE REVELATION

of this intricate problem is at last coming within our reach. The Qur-án, in the clearest terms, based its code of morality and ethics on Divine Lines<sup>1</sup>. This truth is now dawning on the Western mind, which has begun to see true morality in the reflection and shadow of the Divine Attributes. The Kingdom of Heaven on earth, as I said before, will become reality when man shall have equipped himself with Divine Morality. If Jesus prayed for its revelation from on high, as well as for knowledge of the way to achieve it, the last of the Prophets has received it from the Source of all goodness. The Qur-án, he claims, has come to grant us the Charter of the Heavenly Kingdom. It gives us an insight into all those Divine Morals which must be the foundation of our moral code. Prejudice and bigotry, doubtless, will not allow many to accept Qur-ánic teachings as the universal truth. But the Holy Book brings Nature to witness to its verities<sup>2</sup>. Islam does not dogmatize in anything. It appeals to Nature and refers to Nature's pages in support of its teachings. If the real happiness and peace of the world lie in subordinating our volition to the Will of the Most High, we ought not to have the message solely from the mouth of a fellow-creature, no matter what his claims may be. Our culture has enabled us to read the Divine Mind in the pages of His Divine Work, and in it lies the superiority of the Qur-ánic teachings over all other scriptures. All its precepts and principles are illustrated and explained in the universe. Other persuasions may claim to prescribe the Divine Course for our conduct, but the manifestations of Nature are our only safe and true guide in such respect. Its pages, if read with the eye of true observation, disclose mighty and useful lessons that must needs bring us happiness and success. Nature, in fact, reflects the mind of Nature's Creator.

<sup>1</sup> Holy Qur-án, vii. 180, the opening chapter of the Qur-án. Muhammad says, "Dye yourself in the colours of Allah." <sup>2</sup> Ibid., iii. 190.



## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

Nature alone can provide for us a mould in which to cast our morals. The great function that a Book from God should perform would be to remind us of the lessons of Nature.

Scientific research is too slow to bring within our knowledge all that we require for our moral progress on such Divine Lines as are disclosed by Nature, and indeed humanity has passed thousands of years without such knowledge. Divine Revelation therefore came to fill the gap; thus says the Holy Qur-án<sup>1</sup> : It claims to have come to remind us of the laws that are working in the universe—laws that actualize all its capacities and potentialities.

It is for the above reason that the religion of anthropomorphic incarnates together with the belief in vicarious sacrifices for human salvation is at last vanishing. Such beliefs receive no support from Nature, the only index of the Divine Mind, as I have said before. Monotheism must kill all dual or polytheistic creeds. Every working of the Hand behind the Screen is admittedly transcendental and beyond human perception, hence a belief in a "delimited God" is, on the face of it, an absurdity. On the other hand, though the principle of sacrifice is working everywhere in the world, yet it tells us nothing about vicarious atonements. Things belonging to a low order are sacrificed at the altar of the high, for in this lies their uplifting. But members of that high order do not immolate themselves for the salvation of the lower order. Inanimate matter, in the bowels of the earth, effaces even its very name to secure its entry into the vegetable kingdom, vegetables, through sacrifice, achieve locomotion and consciousness when they provide food for the animal kingdom.

Most of the animals, in their turn, when killed and brought to table, become transmuted into humanity. Members of the same order sometimes do sacrifice themselves for others, but

<sup>1</sup> See chapter lxi, which recounts in brief wording the marvellous transformation wrought by Revelation in Arabia.

## THE OBJECT OF DIVINE REVELATION

the sacrifice of the high in the interest of the low is something altogether unknown in the workings of Nature. Hence the doctrine of the "Epiphany"—God loved man so much that He sent His only son to save him through His blood—can no longer appeal to a student of Nature.

Similarly various other "isms," that the human mind has invented for its consolation from time to time, cannot stand the searchlight of modern culture. Their genesis lay in our efforts to secure pleasure and avoid pain. As our scheme to achieve success often becomes frustrated by causes beyond our control, we ascribed our mishaps to some unseen agencies that were secretly working against our interests. We desired to court their favour, and therefore we deified them and approached them with every form of devotion. They became our gods and received from us worship and adoration. Our own passions sometimes joined themselves to the same category. Human lust and anger, for instance, have contrived to clothe themselves in Divine Garments. This produced pantheism in its various forms, and countries from element-worship to man-worship. Fetishism has swayed human belief in different shapes, but the study of Nature as it advanced showed its futility. It was Nature and its various elements that we worshipped to gain prosperity and avoid adversity, and our ignorance placed them on a Divine Pedestal. The Qur-án has exposed this error. It declares that Nature, with all its resources, was created to subserve our ends.<sup>1</sup> But our own ignorance of its ways and our misapplication of them, in consequence, brought calamity. To-day, scientific research has brought home to us the same truth. The gods of yesterday appear to us either as our equals or as ministers of our needs. All such persuasions therefore as require allegiance to doctrine contrary to this truth are doomed to disappear. Religion as followed by every atom of Nature shall be our creed.<sup>2</sup> We

<sup>1</sup> Holy Qur-án, xlv. 12-14.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, xxx. 20.

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

shall no longer worship any man-made god The God of Nature shall be the object of our adoration It is for this reason that Islam is destined to be the future religion of the world, for it encourages Science, looking upon it as its help-mate and comrade for the accomplishment of the grand design for which man was created

If the sole object, therefore, of Science and Revelation is to enlighten us as to what will help us in claiming and possessing our birthright, there cannot be any antagonism between the two False theology cannot go hand in hand with Science if the latter treads the right path When folklore like that collected in the Biblical record was accepted as the Word of God, theology based on such writs must necessarily have been opposed to Science The former, with all its powers, would extinguish the latter It did so in Europe in the Middle Ages, and would do the same again to-day if modern culture had not widened liberality and created the broadmindedness of the present times But scientific discoveries are so vigorously and constantly shaking the Church beliefs in the West that the ever-increasing onslaughts have almost overwhelmed the mind of the Churchman, who now sees the protection and maintenance of his faith only in the cessation of scientific progress The Bishop of Ripon wished to see Science take a holiday for the coming ten years. His Lordship, in fact, needed a breathing-space that might enable the Church to trim its sails to meet the coming storm Modernization in Church theology till now has provided a workable instrument for achieving the desired end, but now it looks like losing its efficacy in the face of present-day culture. Science has recently disclosed certain truths in so invincible a manner that, detrimental as they may be to Church tenets, they admit of no "modernizing" effort on the part of the Church. They have gained favour with the human mind and are certain to vanquish their adversaries In this connection the efforts of the present-

## THE OBJECT OF DIVINE REVELATION

day Modernists in the Church are especially noticeable. They have changed their religion altogether. Their Christianity is quite a different thing from that of the Church. But they try to look to the old faith for countenance. In their attempt to put their house in order and purge it of all that crept into it from Paganism, they are not only clearing off the old furniture, but are refurnishing it with things quite uncongenial to the very atmosphere of the old house. Muslims, however, welcome these efforts, as they see in them the restoration of Faith to its original purity, which is no other than Islam. Islam is not Mohammedanism, though it was the Holy Prophet who preached it some thirteen hundred years ago. He, in fact, restored religion to its pristine beauty, and brought it into conformity with the religion observed by Nature.

We cannot enough admire Jesus when we find that the real object of the Revelation disclosed in his prayer, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven," can be but the one and only object of Revelation. The whole universe obeys the Will of the Lord in its progress and development. The Divine Object in the creation of the world would be accomplished when the Mighty Atom of Nature, i.e. man, should succeed in subjugating his discretionary powers to the Will of the Creative Agency.<sup>1</sup> Happiness will rule the earth when the human race shall have become aware of and observed the ways of the Lord in His governance of the universe.

Science keeps ever the same object before her in her researches, but her progress is too slow to afford us, in our generation, any clear view of what the end is to be. The Great Designer did not delay by looking to the day when Science shall have succeeded in its efforts. Man must know His Will for his guidance on the earth, whether the knowledge comes to him through Science or Revelation. It was God's pleasure, nevertheless, to set us on the right path in this

<sup>1</sup> Holy Qur-án, xx 30

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

respect. He sent His messages to this end from time to time.<sup>1</sup> Thus the world saw great Teachers of Religion in every time and every place.<sup>2</sup> The door of Revelation, therefore, could not be closed until the required knowledge should have become complete. This was the purpose of the Qur-án, which in itself brings the fulfilment of the Nazarene prayer.

All Revelations have unanimously preached one truth. They have proclaimed that man was created after the image of his Creator. But the Qur-án was more explicit in this respect. It defined the position of man in the clearest language. It declared him to be the vicegerent of God on earth.<sup>3</sup> Science arrives at the same conclusion. It calls man the Lord of the Universe. If this is the object of his coming into the world, he cannot be true to his position unless he rules the earth on Divine Lines. Revelation must therefore come to give him hints in the performance of his duty. The Arabic words *Ilhām* and *Wahy* for inspiration convey the same idea. They mean hints from Above to aid man in the accomplishment of the Great Design. He, as God's viceroy, must exhibit Divine Morals. He cannot do so unless and until he knows what they are. If this were not the object of Revelation, there would have been no need of it. Devotion and Glorification by prayers and offerings which are, no doubt, the chief themes in every religion are not mere formalities. True worship lies in implicit loyalty and obedience to God's ways.<sup>4</sup> The recitation of a few sacred words accompanied by prescribed gesticulations are of no avail if their purport is not worked out in our daily lives. Singing hymns at the top of our voices is quite useless if our conduct does not bear testimony to what we profess in those hymns and prayers. A Revelation from Above could not claim finality,<sup>5</sup> as the Qur-án does,

<sup>1</sup> Holy Qur-án, ii 38, vii. 38.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, xiii 8.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, ii 35, vi. 166, xxvii 62, xliii 60

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, ii 21.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, vi 116.

## THE OBJECT OF DIVINE REVELATION

unless it inspires us with the true conception of Godhood<sup>1</sup> We have to fight under the flag of God, and we must know His colours It is by our knowledge of those colours that the dead image of the Lord would become reanimated. It would then establish the Heavenly Kingdom on earth; man would no longer pray for it, but praise Him and give thanks to Him for His Revelation as the opening chapter of the Qur-án teaches.

<sup>1</sup> Holy Qur-án, xxix 45, 49

## CHAPTER IV

# THE KINGDOM OF GOD ANOTHER NAME FOR TRUE CIVILIZATION

THE more I think of the Lord's Prayer (especially of its first portion), the more I am convinced of the prophetic insight possessed by its author, such insight as belongs only to a great messenger from God. It shows that Jesus believed in man's possession of the high capabilities that may reveal in him some of God's features. His Kingdom in the universe discloses beauty, sublimity, grandeur, and splendour; they display themselves in a form consistent with solemnity, seriousness, and high-mindedness. They exclude the slightest idea of vanity or lightness of character. The working of the Governing Hand also discloses transcendental knowledge, and power over all things in Nature. Under His rule they bring forth their inherent faculties, when on their way to progress, thus working out the Great Design. There are also accuracy, exactitude, regularity, and punctuality to be observed in every manifestation of Nature, in obedience to the Great Will, all being the outcome of a premeditated plan, which takes necessary precautions also against all such mishaps as may retard the progress of things to perfection. I have mentioned here only some of the salient features of the Divine Work, since the Kingdom of God could not come on earth unless its ruler—that is to say, man—possess the requisite qualities. And this is no impossibility. If the Qur-án sets God before man as his model, it also selects certain of His qualities for our

## THE KINGDOM OF GOD

imitation. Present-day culture has enabled us also to acquire them, though only to a limited extent

But could these excellent ethics and morals be owned or cultivated by us under those philosophies and theologies which see no good in the human race? Whether such teachings did or did not emanate from these great men who are believed to be their authors—and in my belief they as true reformers and messengers from God could not be responsible for laying down such pernicious principles—they, nevertheless, are passed on under their names. Buddha, they say, observed everywhere trouble and tribulation—the sequel of evil—and saw our liberation from it only in annihilation. His dictum may now be construed by some apologists as meaning Self-Renunciation; but the practice of the religiously advanced Buddhists has always made it synonymous with man's total divorcement from all worldly affairs. The old Brahmins could not see "Reality" in anything. All appeared to them a delusion—*Maya*—with man a self-deluded entity in the universe. They advocated *Tiyag*—separation from mundane things—as the only means for achieving Reality and attaining happiness. A hermit who turned his back on the world, throwing down the burden of all the obligations which society had laid upon him as its member and retiring to the jungle for contemplation, was, according to Hindu theology, the best specimen of humanity

I do not propose to discuss here the utility or otherwise of these "high-flown philosophies," but they seem to drench, with a cold douche, all the enthusiasm that could possibly actuate man towards achieving civilization in any high form. They may supply us with a good mental food for contemplation, but it is a mental luxury only and baneful in its effects. It leads its followers to deprecate all such manly qualities as are necessary for the defence of our rights. It makes them an easy prey to others' aggression. Ancient India indulged



## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

in such philosophies, and produced literature that may be fascinating as literature, but no one can deny its harmful influence on the minds of those who took it seriously, seeing that it set them firmly against all the activities necessary in the field of material progress

The Church in the West went a step farther. It produced a theology, in this respect even worse. It declared that man was born in sin. It asserted that he was an embodiment of evil and by nature incapable of any good. It was in pursuance of such beliefs that every effort to attain material progress was discouraged and looked down upon with contempt in Christian lands in the Middle Ages. "Man was unworthy of the earth, and polluted this sacred footstool of God." So Calvin and other theologians of his class thought of sin under the inspiration which they had received from the Church dogma. Calvin longed for the day when some colossal earthquake would swallow up this loathsome personification of all that was abominable in the eye of the Lord.

Again I say, could such beliefs favour any progress on any line—whether material or spiritual. If sin means disobedience to the Law and is innate in us, we are of course incapable of obeying the Law. Such a condition of mind cannot produce any sort of civilization. It is "Obedience to Law," which the word "Islam" literally means, that carries us to success.

The author of the Lord's Prayer cannot be held responsible for these Church tenets. If the Creator of the universe is also the Source of all goodness, He could be our "Father in Heaven." A son, as an Arabic proverb says, is the secret of his father. He possesses inherently his father's characteristics, good or bad, though it depends upon environment whether such characteristics be fully displayed or not. The son of a wicked man is prone to reveal all the bad traits he inherits, though he may not do so in the face of public

## THE KINGDOM OF GOD

opinion Healthy surroundings may convert him to a better state of mind But his nature is that which he received from his father How could a creature, whose very nature is compounded of sin, come from the loins of the Heavenly Father? It is mere blasphemy even to imagine it, and a gross libel on the memory of him who laid down so broad a principle of goodness for his disciples when he taught them to approach God with this beautiful prayer Such a sickening and repulsive creature as Church theology makes out man to be could not beseech his Lord for the appearance of the day when the Holy Kingdom, with all the Dignity, Grace, and Beauty thereof, shall come within his reach

One may pass over these precepts as an accretion to the original teachings of the Great Master, but we fail to find any real purpose served by Divine Revelations if they remain silent on a subject so important in the working out of our civilization They seem to remain unconcerned, and want us to remain so too, with the inestimable treasures of the universe. Everything in Creation is purposeful,<sup>1</sup> and the purpose lies chiefly in its use to us, but if a religion from God did not open our eyes to this beneficent working of the Creator, His whole work would appear to be aimless It would be to find fault with His Design if we thought so, therefore it ought to be the chief function of Divine Revelation to make us aware of His Gifts<sup>2</sup> Some think that religion should not concern our mundane affairs The " Kingdom of Christ is not of this world " Religion came only to show us how to worship and glorify God and give Him thanks, or to provide ourselves with means for our own salvation I will speak of salvation subsequently, but the prayer of Jesus contradicts all such assertions How could we pray for the Heavenly Kingdom to come on earth, if his own Kingdom had nothing to do with the things of that earth? We no doubt possess

<sup>1</sup> Holy Qur-án, xxxviii 27

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. iii. 189.

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

the worshipping instinct, but it has always found its gratification in directing our devotional feelings to some kind of deity even without any revelation prompting us to do so. From a stone to a son of woman, man has adorned various manifestations of Nature as his god, and he has been none the worse for it—seeing that he has been able to keep a certain moral order under any system of worship. The worship of idols has, at times, inspired him with noble and lofty feelings, like those which have been observed in the most worthy of the worshippers of God. Prayers addressed to images made by man's own hand have in their beauty, grandeur, and sincerity surpassed even the devotional utterances of the holiest monotheist while adoring the Most High.

Again, the circle of our gratefulness to our Creator would become inexpressibly widened with the increase of our knowledge of His Gifts to us.<sup>1</sup> We cannot thank Him for His creating us a plaything in the hands of sin and evil. Did He create us for an incessant struggle against evil that would carry us day by day to perdition? It would be most ungrateful of us if we thought so. On the other hand, when millions of things come within our knowledge so pregnant with benefit to us, our mind becomes filled with gratitude. Every discovery of these valuable treasures, so essential to our happiness and comfort, intensifies our sense of thanksgiving. And if Divine Revelation really demands thanksgiving from us to the Lord, it has failed in its purpose if it does not prompt us to make discoveries in the universe. We are saddled with various needs, which are ever on the increase. This fact enhances our anxiety and stirs our activities to look for some means of satisfying their needs, but our thanks to the Lord would know no bounds if we found what is needful for us already in existence, created by the Beneficent Lord out of His own goodness, thousands of years before we came to the shores of light.

<sup>1</sup> Holy Qur-án, lv.

## THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Similarly our glorification of our Creator would be at its worthiest if we found His Hand working wonders everywhere. Everything in the universe is a wonderful repository of unimaginable potentialities. They all move in the same groove for the completion of our happiness<sup>1</sup> Would not our knowledge of their service to us enhance our sense of gratitude to the Lord? If glorification were one of the essentials of religion, we should miss a great thing were revelation to remain silent concerning it It would do an immense service to the sacred cause if it made science a worthy pursuit for humanity.

Undoubtedly we do need a moral code, and every religion gives us some rules of morality, but they are of no value to us Even if we own but few things, it is to protect our earnings against usurpation and misappropriation that we do need some moral code for counteracting avarice and cupidity, and controlling the unbridled demands of passion and desire. These come into play when we see others possessed of things that we need, yet lack the energy to attain. In short, the promulgation of some moral code demands the pre-existence of the things which contribute to our comfort But if our possessions are few, we do not need any evolved system of morality A few rules, like those enunciated in the Ten Commandments, would be sufficient to maintain order in society. This will necessarily cause all the moral and spiritual forces in us to remain in abeyance, but the Great Designer did not intend such a state of things If the working of the said forces is necessary to fulfil the object of our creation, how could the required condition be attained if we remained ignorant of the various resources of Nature? A religion without some suggestions to its followers as to how they may bring these gifts of God into human service cannot claim perfection for its teachings.

It may be said that those attainments were man's own business, that Providence became absolved from its duty when

<sup>1</sup> Holy Qur-án, xiii 33-34, xvi 12-13, 18, 64-71.

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

it created the things that we needed, and that it was our concern to find out how to use them. But the history of Modern Science contradicts such presumptions. The blessings of God remained unnoticed for thousands of years. Their benefits to us did not come into operation until the Last Word of God—the Qur-án—invited our attention to the task of developing Nature to our benefit.<sup>1</sup> Nay, we adopted a contrary course for want of any true light on the subject. Instead of reducing Nature to our service, we placed many of its manifestations on the throne of Divinity. They continued in their ministry to us in the capacity of servants, but we ascribed it to their divine favour towards us, their abject worshippers—the handmaid became the master of the house, and the master a menial. Man, with all his inherent faculties for the attainment of the required knowledge, could not reverse this unnatural state of things and put them right until Al-Qur-án came and opened our eyes to it. All our gods, it proclaimed, were our ministers and slaves. They were our subjects, and we their rulers. The Book went farther. It declared that nothing in Creation was without its aim,<sup>2</sup> and that the said aim was conducive to our benefit. This Gospel awakened the forces sleeping within us, and in a short time we saw an upheaval of culture not known before. Under the inspiration of the Qur-án, Muslims laid the foundations of the Modern Sciences, which are progressing day by day. Without the knowledge of these sciences the prayed-for Kingdom of the Nazarene cannot grace the earth in its full glory!

Though this knowledge of Nature's secrets is indispensable, it is nevertheless liable to prove perilous to human peace and welfare if it is not controlled strictly by some moral and spiritual regime so evolved as to meet the requirements of an advanced material progress. That this is so is amply illustrated by modern progress in the West. All the blessings

<sup>1</sup> Holy Qur-án, xliii 12-14, xlv 12-14.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., xxxviii 27

## THE KINGDOM OF GOD

of God discovered in these days are employed by some to the destruction of others. The abundance of our riches has weakened our moral sense. Man prowls through life like a savage beast, devastating all the moral harvest as he goes. The Qur-ánic Revelation foresaw this and provided a course. It kept our progress under a strict moral control. Wherever the Book invites us to bring the treasures of Nature to our service, it gives prominence to the cultivation of the moral aspects of our lives and characters as well. There is a very beautiful verse<sup>1</sup> in the Holy Qur-án which has been, and will ever be, a true key to material progress. A humble recognition of the truth laid down in this verse would, if acted upon, carry us to the height of material civilization. The verse says that those who make researches in the realm of heaven and earth, and find out that there is nothing that is useless for us, and then bring each particular use as they discover it to the service of humanity, are men of true wisdom and understanding. But their wisdom and understanding will not become complete unless they keep God before their eyes in every moment of life—that is to say, unless all their words and deeds are after the mind of God. A person who would enter on the field of scientific researches, as the Qur-án desires that man should with this moral equipment, will really and in the true sense of the words bring the Kingdom of God on earth.

### THE ESSENTIALS OF CIVILIZATION

The words of the prayer may not be appreciated by those who are reluctant to believe in the existence of the great Mover of Nature. Be that as it may; to a man of wisdom the

<sup>1</sup> "Most surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day there are signs for men of understanding. Those who remember Allah standing and sitting and lying on their sides and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth. Our Lord! Thou hast not created this in vain! glory be to Thee! save us then from the chastisement of the fire"—Al-Qur-án, iii 189, 190

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

form of words is of no account, provided those words convey or suggest some truth. We all believe in the working of Nature on prescribed lines. We also may address her poetically in the very words of Jesus, investing her with the qualities of mind. It will appear, then, that in all our scientific activities we are only trying to see her will—Nature's will—established on earth, we wish to learn more of her laws and willingly "walk in her ways." We wish to imitate her especially in the matter of civilization, since she herself has evolved it in its most perfect form. She has brought all her components under complete control and has given to each and all of them laws which they follow implicitly, thereby producing for us countless benefits. Each of them has its own sphere of labour, where it works, in accordance with the law. None overlaps the province of another. The Holy Qur-án refers to these phenomena in the following words. "And the sun runs on to a term appointed for it, that is the ordinance of the Mighty, the Knowing. And (as for) the moon, We have ordained for it stages till it becomes again as an old dry palm branch. Neither is it allowable to the sun that it should overtake the moon, nor can the night outstrip the day, and all float on in a sphere" (xxxvi 38-40)

We are seeking a like control of Nature's elements. We are endeavouring to discover all laws by which they are governed. In short, it is our aim to do on our own account the selfsame thing which Nature is doing in the universe. We have, materially speaking, partially succeeded in our efforts, but with all our progress in this respect we have only contrived to increase human misery. A terrible conflict has arisen between man and man. Capital and labour are at war; Communism would destroy Imperialism if it could. Subject races have become weary of the foreign yoke and strive for liberty. Nations rise against each other and there is no peace anywhere on earth. But in the realms of the dumb world, as

## THE KINGDOM OF GOD

I said before, every unit of it seems contented with its lot. Though the world is full of antitheses, yet its jarring elements work ever in harmony. They live and let others live, and to this rule man is the only exception. He is creating chaos in the cosmos. It would have been possible for us, too, to share this universal peace with the rest of Nature had we but shown something of her broadness of mind and liberality in our treatment of others. We ought, therefore, to follow Nature on the moral and ethical plane as we have tried to follow her on the material side if we wish to achieve real happiness. But Nature herself is admittedly an unconscious mass; whereas the framing of the law and the precision with which it rules the lifeless world, together with the predominance throughout of moral order, lead us to believe in the existence of some Mind, inspiring and controlling. In the phraseology of Islam, "Rabb" is the name of that mind, Who creates everything in Nature and rules it with a perfect Law. If I substitute the word "Rabb" for Nature in the lines I have quoted, then let the workers in laboratories try to find out such of His ways as may enable man to officiate for Him on earth. We could succeed in this did we but adopt His moral and ethical methods on the same lines as we try to follow in our efforts towards material progress. We should, then, banish misery and unhappiness from the frontiers of humanity. This state of things would imply this Divine Vicegerency by man on earth—such as is spoken of in the Qur-án. This is the only meaning that could rightly be given to the prayer of Jesus. He did not look for the day when he would come to earth again to sit in judgment. He longed rather for the time when man should represent his Creator, as ruler of the Universe. The accomplishment of this great object is conditional upon the following three things

(a) That we attain to complete knowledge of all natural phenomena and of the laws under which they work.



## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

(b) That we rise superior to our animal nature.

(c) That we practise that lofty code of morality which is styled in the Qur-án, the morals of God

The first four verses of chapter 16, quoted on page 58, which came in response to the prayer of Jesus allude to these three things

First, it states that God created the heavens and earth with the truth, i.e. they were not in vain, everything in them had been made for the use of man. In the subsequent verses the Book refers to the ways which may enable us to subdue Nature to our service.

Secondly, the Book says that man is "an open contender" by birth. There is a brute in him, and he has first to humanize the brute before he aspires to become God's lieutenant on earth.

Thirdly, the quotation lays special stress on our belief in the unity of God, seeing that in this belief lay the acquisition of everything necessary for establishing the Kingdom of God.

The lesson of pure monotheism was to be deeply imprinted upon the tablet of the human mind, in view of the fact that most of the things in the universe, destined to come under our rule, had been placed by man on pedestals of Divinity, prior to the advent of Islam. Such divinities must be dethroned, and for this the Qur-án said "Highly exalted be He above what they associate with Him."

Moreover, true monotheism demands that we dissociate ourselves completely from all such ways and methods as are not those of the Most High and in steeping ourselves in His colours. Then the image of God, lifeless as it is, will become vitalized and bring forth His spirit, and the Kingdom of God will come on earth.

We should not lose our sense of judgment or indulge in ridicule simply because a truth is clothed in words which we do not like. We ought rather to see the reality behind those words, and in this connection I ask again, if even a so-called

## THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Freethinker could reasonably take exception to it, if we attain such a state of felicity *Whatever may be our creed, we are all striving for the same ends, the conquest of Nature and the attainment of moral perfection.* They are our highest ideals; they represent the zenith of our Civilization. Nevertheless, history tells us that man cannot hope to achieve any such results without guidance from Above. Humanity continued to grope in the dark until the Qur-án flashed the light of Truth before it. If Revelation came for this object only, as the Qur-án says, it rendered man the greatest service possible. Then, why ridicule religion? Religion in the form of Islam has set man on the right path to his goal. All that makes men averse to religion has no place in Islam. It is true that most of the pre-Islamic religions in their present form, especially in the form they assumed after their first promulgation, have tended to retard human progress by the teaching of unwholesome tenets and unnatural theology. Such had no place in the Divine Revelation, and had nothing at all to do with the Word of God. But let us take things as they are, and sift the matter for ourselves, as seekers after truth. Leaving Religion out of the question altogether for the moment, let us study the history of Culture and Civilization. Can we point to any stage of their development when the truth that gave a new impetus to our progress dawned upon the human mind, independently of Religion? On the contrary, that truth was revealed in the pages of the Qur-án. It has altered the whole trend of human thought and has caused a tremendous revolution even in religious ideas. It has, too, enlarged the borders of Religion immeasurably. Religion had till then been taken as an institution designed solely for our future salvation, but the Qur-án made it the best means for achieving universal world reform.

So I go further, and make bold to ask if even a semblance of the truth had ever entered into the human breast before

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

the coming of Islam The pre-Islamic world had seen the rise and fall of civilization after civilization in one race after another, but with all their culture those races exhibited the very worst type of polytheism. Almost all the elements of Nature—which are, properly speaking, our slaves and servants—were then our gods, but the Voice thundering from Above awoke the mind of man from its stupor. If the following words were not from God, how could an illiterate person like the Holy Prophet, lapped as he was in an atmosphere of complete ignorance, have raised up a nation sunk deep in that stupor for centuries and read the secret that changed the whole course of humanity for the future? He announced in the clearest terms:

“Allah is He who created the heavens and the earth and sent down water from the clouds, then brought forth with it fruits as a sustenance for you, and He has made the ships subservient to you, that they might run their course in the sea by His command, and He has made the rivers subservient to you. And He has made subservient to you the sun and the moon pursuing their courses, and He has made subservient to you the night and the day And He gives you of all that you ask Him, and if you count Allah's favours, you will not be able to number them, most surely man is very unjust, very ungrateful” (Qur-án, xiv 32, 33, 34) “And He has made subservient for you the night and the day and the sun and the moon, and the stars are made subservient by His command; most surely there are signs in this for a people who ponder, And what He has created in the earth of varied hues; most surely there is a sign in this for a people who are mindful. And He it is Who has made the sea subservient that you may eat fresh flesh from it and bring forth from it ornaments which you wear, and *you see* the ships cleaving through it, and that you might seek of His bounty and that you may give thanks. And He has cast great mountains in the earth *lest it*

## THE KINGDOM OF GOD

*might be convulsed with you, and rivers and roads that you may go aright, And landmarks, and by the stars they find the right way. Is He then Who creates like him who does not create? Do you not then mind?*" (Qur-án, xvi 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17).

These verses omit no single thing in Nature that is of any service to us. Everything we need has been spoken of here. Our requirements are on the increase and will be, they have been so ever since the Holy Prophet proclaimed his message, but we have here the key wherewith we may open this treasure-house and discover things to meet our needs. The verses, however, command us to cultivate every branch of science, including astronomy and the art of navigation. It is noteworthy, too, that all these verses—and others like them in the Holy Book—conclude with words like these

"There is a sign in it for a people who reflect", "who ponder", "who are mindful", "who are men of understanding"<sup>1</sup> and use their intellect. But these faculties cannot develop without our eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge. This was announced in the first Revelation in the Cave of Hira, in the following words

"Read and your Lord is most honourable; Who taught with the pen, Taught man what he knew not" (Holy Qur-án, xcvi 3-5). The Book, when speaking of the angels' ministry to man, based man's lordship over them upon his knowledge<sup>2</sup> of the things in the Universe

For this reason Muhammed gave the following injunctions

"He dieth not who takes to learning. Whoever reveres the learned reveres me. To obtain education is incumbent on every Muslim, male and female. Seek after knowledge though it be available in China. To listen to the words of the learned and to instil into others the lessons of science is better than religious excess. The ink of the scholar is more holy than the blood of the martyr. He who leaves home in search of

<sup>1</sup> Holy Qur-án, iii

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., ii 21.

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

knowledge walks in the path of Allah Acquire knowledge It enables the possessor to distinguish right from wrong; it lights the way to heaven, it is our friend in the desert, our society in solitude, our companion when friendless, it guides us to happiness, it sustains us in misery, it is an ornament among friends and an armour against enemies "

The words of the Prophet did not fall on deaf ears The acquisition of knowledge became a sacred duty with a Muslim.

All other religions before Islam kept silence on this subject Knowledge was, we know, a forbidden tree in Christianity, but other faiths also treated it with the like distrust, or, sometimes, with mere indifference It is hard to appreciate the value of an institution sent from God if it did not come to foster the one gift that could differentiate between the human and the beast I allude to our intellect or conscience, for knowledge is its only nourishment But from Noah to Jesus no Messenger from God said anything directly on the subject We find the same deficiency in other Teachers of Religion Though some branches of knowledge were cultivated by the Hindus of old, yet such cultivation was confined to the priestly class Even the ancient civilizations did not care greatly for knowledge It was left to the illiterate Prophet of Arabia to make knowledge an essential of faith for his followers He himself knew neither how to read nor how to write, but he drew men's attention to the use of the pen He found man dwelling in sheer incontinence and saw the remedy only in the acquirement of learning His followers accepted the gospel They entered into the fields of science, and very soon afterwards reaped the richest of harvests. They had been told to discover new learning, hitherto undreamed of. The world till then had been interested, though to a limited extent, perhaps, in the cultivation of occult power, which men mistook for spirituality. The human eye remained blind to all that was good and useful in the heavens and the earth. Nature

## THE KINGDOM OF GOD

was full of beauty and sublimity, but for thousands of years man could not see it. The mighty Son of the desert, the denizen of a barren land—and so Arabia is even to this day, without any natural resources or scenic beauties whatever—came to open the eyes of mankind to the wonderland of Nature. He told us of the treasures that lay hidden in seas and mountains, and in the heavens and earth. He created in us the taste for enjoying the beauties of Nature. He did not bore the world with any such sickly theology as had already killed all power of æsthetic appreciation. Man had been commanded by unnatural dogmas to have no concern, however innocently, with worldly things, but the great Benefactor of humanity said to us

“Say Who has prohibited the embellishment of Allah which He has brought forth for His servants and the good provisions? I say These are for the believers in the life of this world” (Holy Qur-án. xii 32)

It was an exhortation entirely new in the annals of Religion. The Muslims hearkened to it and devoted themselves to finding out all that was for their benefit and improvement in creation. They applied themselves to discovering such knowledge as would enable them to succeed in this new pursuit, and the foundation of modern science was thus laid with phenomenal success.

Islam is a towering landmark between the former system of learning and the modern mode of culture. Learning remained confined to the priestly class—within the four walls of shrines and temples—who interested themselves in metaphysical riddles. They wasted their time on theories which had no bearing whatever on the practical side of life. Islam came to make the whole universe a subject of study. The Muslims not only restored to Europe the writings of Ptolemy, Euclid, and Aristotle, that had nearly been forgotten by Christian Europe, since it was almost in the nature of a sin to cultivate

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

any knowledge under that regime, but they themselves made a splendid addition to the ancient lore. Besides this they contributed three treasures of intellectual wealth.

(1) They renewed and improved scholastic philosophy which had been abused by Hellenic vanity and paralysed by the grossness of the Romans.

(2) They systematized mathematical science.

(3) They cultivated natural and experimental knowledge to which neither the Greeks nor Romans had attached any value.

The Muslims also did great service to medical science in all its branches, and while non-Muslims went to the shrine of one saint or another to be cured of their ailments, the Muslims went to hospitals for treatment. Hospitals and asylums with capable nurses and able physicians spread everywhere in the early Muslim Empire. In Bagdad alone there were 864 licensed physicians. Hospitals for animals were also founded. Medicine and pharmacy were greatly advanced. Chemistry and algebra, astronomy and trigonometry, botany and optics—they were all either invented or advanced by Muslim learning. The sciences of agriculture and navigation also were greatly elaborated. The remains of the Moorish occupation in Spain to-day are eloquent of the wonderful system of irrigation introduced there by the Muslims. Egypt too, in the first Muslim century, had under cultivation an area five times as great as the present one. The cotton plant and sugar-cane were first introduced into Europe in those days. The weaving of silk and cotton, the printing of calico and the dyeing of stuffs were a few of the arts developed to a high pitch of perfection by the Arabs. They not only manufactured glass, but knew how to embellish it both within and without. Even aviation was attempted in the days of Al-Mamun, but Abu 'l-Casin, the first inventor of the flying machine, crashed when flying and was killed. Upon this aspect of my subject I do not think I need dwell further.

## THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The reader can easily estimate the extent to which Muslim aspiration for scientific research should go, if he ponders the following words of the Qur-án

“Men of understanding” are those who “reflect on the creation of the heaven and the earth,” and say, “Thou hast not created this in vain” “Glory be to Thee” In the light of this verse we have to reflect that whatever we may perceive around us is purposeful, and its purpose is for our benefit. The verse makes the whole universe, as it were, our university and every atom of it a book. It is not therefore a matter of surprise to find an extraordinary upheaval, if the term be permitted, of learnings in the beginning of Islam when such a mighty impetus for the acquirement of knowledge was given in words believed by Muslims to have come from God Himself

It is true that the instances I have cited concern material progress only, but that is the primary essential of true Civilization Islam can justly claim to have given it to the world. Religion therefore has been the greatest benefactor to humanity even when the question is considered solely on the material side In this respect I may say that we have not yet reached that stage of civilization to which the Qur-án intends to carry us The Book says that the sun and the moon have been created to minister to our needs We have not succeeded in harnessing them as yet, the sun, for instance, has yet to plough our fields for us and his heat to replace that of coal-gas and electricity in our kitchens. Electric light is a blessing without doubt, but we need moon-light to take its place This would not only save our sight from the harmful glare of electricity, but would also bring coolness and strength to our eyes. These are one or two of the hundreds of services which the two luminaries could render to humanity, and there are millions of things in the realm of the stars and in the bowels of the earth and ocean that have been created for our service Man



## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

has to a certain extent become aware of this, but the whole credit must go to the power that opened his eyes to it. That power is, after all, Religion, but Religion in the guise of Islam, which has made a marked departure in this respect from other forms of faith. Thus has Islam redeemed Religion from all the charges hurled against it by Culture.

FOLLOWING is the quotation referred to on page 50

Allah's commandment has come, therefore do not desire to hasten it, glory be to Him, and highly exalted be He above what they associate (with Him)

He sends down the angels with the inspirations by His commandment on whom He pleases of His servants, saying Give the warning that there is no god but Me, therefore be careful (of your duty) to Me

He created the heavens and the earth with the truth, highly exalted be He above what they associate (with Him)

He created man from a small life-germ, and lo! he is an open contender.

## CHAPTER V

### CANKERED CIVILIZATION

MODERN civilization, though still far from its appointed goal, continues to make steady progress. Certain of the elements in Nature have been brought under man's control; he may even claim to govern, though within certain limits, earth, water, fire, and air. Electricity has entered his service, and the day is at hand when the stars in their courses will do likewise, as is revealed in the Qur-án.<sup>1</sup> But this progress is imperilled, for the Western world is its present pioneer, and the Western world has become diseased and its civilization cankered—a state of things which is enervating the human body, and must ere long lead to physical decrepitude on a scale which may leave no strength or stamina for further progress. If a sound mind be the child of a sound body, the latter in its turn owes its very existence to moral sanity. Every seat of civilization in the Western world has turned or is turning into a nursery of evil—evil that will physically paralyse the human race within two or three generations; and thus all progress will be stopped. Consider, for example, the effect of venereal contagion,<sup>2</sup> which is playing dreadful

<sup>1</sup> "And He has made subservient for you the night and the day and the sun and the moon, and the stars are made subservient to His commandments" (Qur-án, xvi 12)

<sup>2</sup> On the subject of New York, Mr Kidwā'i says: "In the very country of the Rev. Dr Holmes the result of this non-repression of the sex instinct by any powerful or effective religion is that five million acts of prostitution are being committed every day and 98 per cent. of the prostitutes are venereally affected, although the secular law of the United States is very strict against prostitution in any form. It

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

havoc with our manhood. There is already an appreciable decrease in the birth-rate in the West, and those born in the coming generation are likely to prove a race of rickety weaklings, doomed to early extinction.

Medical science is contemplating a method of injection as a cure for this trouble. It may succeed in its attempt, and score yet another victory for science over disease, but its efforts must needs prove an additional danger to health in the long run. It will act as a sort of physiological atonement, no less perilous to moral well-being than that spiritual atonement given to humanity through the medium of the Formal Church in the West.

The fear of punishment is an effective check to evil on this earth. We find this truth exemplified—fear of the law, of disease, and of the wrath to come. In each case it has noticeably stemmed the onrush of evil, but unfortunately, Western culture has removed the criminal stigma from a variety of evils that tend to destroy the fabric of society. The doctrine of Atonement removed the fear of a punishment to be meted out to a sinner in the hereafter. If the West has become more unrighteous than the East, it is because that doctrine has put a sort of premium on sin in Christian lands. Fear of punishment by Nature in the form of some terrible disease has led to the discovery of a remedy administered to a wrong—is said that 225,000 illegitimate children are born every year in New York alone, 2,500,000 cases of syphilis are treated annually, and a million and a half unborn babies are murdered every year in America.

"These are appalling statistics, but based on authentic sources. These are the results of the non-repression of the sex instinct.

"As recently as in June, 1929, Mr. Gover Whalen, the Police Commissioner of New York, made a statement that crime was steadily increasing throughout the United States. He declared that it was comparatively easy to clear up the old saloons or public-houses because they were in the open. To-day there are 32,000 'speakeasies' in the City of New York which he described as breeding-places for crime and prostitution. It was impossible to eradicate 'speakeasies,' he said, because they sprang up overnight like mushrooms." (*Islamic Review*, vol. xviii, p. 58.)

## CANKERED CIVILIZATION

doer to protect him against various wasting illnesses. The discovery of such a remedy would obviate the need of carefulness, and give the wrongdoer *carte blanche* to indulge his wicked passions. The human blood ought to be saved from further vitiation, but excess in self-indulgence, a necessary sequel of the contemplated injection remedies, will hasten on the state of physical wreck, which, in its turn, will engender and attract a number of deadly diseases—among them premature senility *Why should we not think of some moral injection to obviate the necessity of a physical one in this respect?*

But there are many other evils, apart from sexual vice, which are steadily undermining the superstructure of the so-called civilized nations. These have invented poison-gas and liquid fire for the destruction of one another, yet syphilis, consumption, and other terrible diseases give the same result, but in a form even more terrible. Besides adultery of an unbridled nature, there are other factors making for immediate downfall. Drinking, gambling, cheating, and polite robbery, indulged in even by the so-called weaker sex; the lynching of negroes, murder, fighting, racial prejudice, usury, capitalism whose aim it is to rob labour of its rightful dues, exploitation, and all the rest. Want of filial regard and neglect of all moral and social bonds in the name of freedom are among the chief features of the age. Libertinism is confounded with liberty. These conditions present an awful prospect and can be no guarantee for the continuance of any of the present conditions of apparent prosperity. The fate of Pompeii waits at the door of many a town in the Western world. "Our history," so says the *Sign of the Times* of America, "will parallel that of Rome and other nations of history, whose lust and passion sent them with their wine, women, and song to the gates of hell and oblivion. They are paving their way to the infernal regions on this very earth of God." Is such a history worth while? Yet the most pitiable thing in the

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

whole business is the fact that the very writers who are discussing present-day civilization are by so doing accelerating its destruction. We need not look for any post-grave hell, we have got it here, in the mother-cities of the world. It is a poisonous moral ulcer that has infected the whole system. *But where is its remedy?* Material culture has quite definitely failed to find it, and the same may, to a very great extent, be said of Christianity. The lands of culture and Christianity breed and nurse these vices. America spends millions of dollars on her Foreign Christian Missions. They send missionaries for the purpose of improving the morals of others, but they themselves are confessedly bankrupt of all morality. Christianity has been weighed in the balance and found wanting. Whithersoever it has penetrated it has carried in its train drinking and gambling, fornication and adultery.

An invidious comparison of the different teachings of the various creeds in this respect would be profitless. The tree is known by its fruits. The East is cleaner than the West, and among Eastern races the Muslims present a purer life, and this is no rash assertion. Figures and facts substantiate it. We have become impoverished in worldly goods by reason of foreign economic pressure, but moral wealth is ours, which will in the end bring supremacy to the downtrodden race when once it has awakened from the lethargy in which it is at present sunk. Though Muslims live for the most part in hotter climates, yet they are free from venereal disease. We are not wealthy, but there is no unemployment in Muslim lands. Pauper parents with millionaire children are a phenomenon quite unknown to the East.

It is not difficult to find the real cause. Islam is a livable religion, and its practical tenets have produced these happy results. The Qur-án is not a book of impracticable ethics teeming with ideals of a visionary. Other religions preach morality, we know, but the Book of Islam and the teachings

## CANKERED CIVILIZATION

of Muhammad have about them the discernible distinction. They neither sermonize on morality in general terms nor do they lose themselves in philosophical conundrums. Islam does not impart its lessons in a confused and jumbled form. Like a lecturer in the anatomical room, it gives the name of and locates every joint and nerve of evil. It probes into each individual case, it lays its finger on the diseased part and then puts it under its surgical or other medicinal treatment, as the case may be. A critic may doubt this statement, but let him, for a moment, consider the conditions obtaining in the world in this regard, and discover the causes. Culture has failed, Christianity and other religions have also failed. Islam, though also a religion, wins the race. The why and how of the case are to be found in its tenets, which are both practicable and livable. I quote here a few verses from the Qur-án dealing with this point. No doubt there are other books of religion that speak of these vices, but the Qur-án passes judgment on each and all of them with the emphasis appropriate for each. The Book omits nothing that can in any way affect human morals. But let us turn to the practical side of the business. The question of questions is. What other influence than the Qur-án reformed the wickedest people that the earth of God ever saw, at the advent of Muhammad in Arabia, and brought them to righteousness and clean-living? Islam, shattered though it be economically at the present day, is still everywhere proud of this achievement.

MURDER—"O you who believe, retaliation is prescribed for you in the matter of the slain . . ."

"And there is life for you in (the law of) retaliation, O men of understanding." (Qur-án, ii. 178-79.)

"And do not kill anyone whom Allah has forbidden except for a just cause." (Qur-án, xvii. 33.)

SEXUAL VICES.—Adultery comes next to murder in its heinousness. It wrecks domestic happiness utterly and com-

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

pletely. Though passion for sensual indulgence in these days has weakened all sense of moral responsibility in the Western mind, such abnormal conditions must come to an end ere long. When I read of the flood of fornication in the civilized world I think that the punishment prescribed in the Qur-án alone can deter the evil. The Book says "And go not nigh to fornication, surely it is an indecency and evil is the way" (xvii. 32)

"(As for) the fornicatress and the fornicator, flog each of them, (giving) a hundred stripes, and let not pity for them detain you in the matter of obedience to Allah, if you believe in Allah and the last day, and let a party of believers witness their chastisement."

"The fornicator shall not marry any but a fornicatress or idolatress, and (as for) the fornicatress, none shall marry her but a fornicator or an idolater, and it is forbidden to the believers" (xxiv 2 and 3)

Under the Qur-ánic teachings every woman that embraces Islam has to make a pledge as the women used to do in the days of the Holy Prophet. She must promise that she will not steal, and will not commit fornication, and will not kill her children, and will not bring a calumny which she has herself forged (Qur-án, lx 12)

More than thirteen hundred years have passed since the Qur-án proposed the above pledge. It is as true to-day and applicable to-day, especially in the refined West, as it was in the unpolished Arabia of long ago. Children of illicit connection are killed, even when in the womb. Infanticide, in the form of birth-control, has become a recognized fashion of our time. In this respect and in allusion to the reasons that cause this crime, the Qur-án says: "And do not kill your children for fear of poverty, We give them sustenance and yourselves (too); surely to kill them is a great wrong." (Qur-án, xvii. 31)

The Sacred Book (iv. 24) also condemns the system of

## CANKERED CIVILIZATION

keeping women as mistresses, and brings experimental and companionate marriages under the same category.

GAMBLING AND DRINKING—"O you who believe! intoxicants and games of chance and (sacrificing to stones set up) and (dividing) by arrows are only an uncleanness, the devil's work, shun it therefore that you may be successful " "The devil only desires to cause enmity and hatred to spring in your midst by means of intoxicants and games of chance, and to keep you off from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer; will you then desist?"

CHEATING, ETC—"And do not swallow up your property, among yourselves by false means " (Qur-án, ii. 188)

FIGHTING AND WAR—If there are occasions for self-defence against persecution, fighting in such form as the circumstances demand and only to the extent of self-defence, is an indisputable human institution This cannot be too strongly emphasized The Prince of Peace came as a Teacher of humanity, but he did not "come for peace," he came "to send fire and sword in the earth " He would have done so, if he could He also asked some of his disciples to purchase a sword by selling their garments But perhaps the fit occasion did not arise He left it to his people of the coming generations to promulgate their own rules of war and they have set the very worst possible example in the matter

Laity and clergy have walked knee-deep in blood. They are at the same game now In short, human society needed some ethics of war, some warrior prophet was required to give precept and example. The ambiguous words of Jesus, as quoted above, have had terrible repercussions throughout the world. Israel, with Ramachandra and Krishna—the two Indian Prophets of their times—took harsh measures against their enemies. they knew no distinction between a civilian and a belligerent in the hostile camp

In our day the Hague Tribunal has tried to meet the



## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

situation, but the Great War set all its rules at naught, as its decision had not, on man, the binding force of a Divine institution.

Muhammad appeared as the Last Teacher in the world of religion. He brought the Final Message from the Most High. The code of life he promulgated for man, under Divine Revelation, would have remained imperfect, if the occasion that necessitated the unsheathing of the sword had not arisen in his lifetime. It came, and he made the code complete.

This subject really needs a separate chapter, and I will write on it, in detail, in the following chapter.

RACIAL PREJUDICE —The Father of democracy, as Muhammad can be rightly styled, spoke the following words on the day of his final pilgrimage to Mecca, in a sermon that proved to be his last, for he left the world within a few months of its utterance. "*The aristocracy of old time is trampled under my feet. The Arab has no superiority over him that is not an Arab, and he that is not Arab has no superiority over the Arab. All are children of Adam, and Adam was made of earth*"

The Arabs of the days of the Prophet were prouder of their race than are the white people of our days in the West. But the aristocracy of old time was uprooted by the Great Advocate of equality between man and man, and it is that equality alone which can eradicate racial prejudice. The world is on its way to universalism, and the work of Muhammad in this connection will very soon be complete. The Qur-án speaks very strongly of this equality on different occasions, but all its words may be epitomized in the truth promulgated by the Sacred Book, when it says,<sup>1</sup> they are equal members of the family of God, be they white or black, colourless or coloured.

UNEMPLOYMENT —This is one of the curses of modern civilization, though an immediate result of the war between

<sup>1</sup> "(All) people are a single nation." (Qur-án, II 213)

## CANKERED CIVILIZATION

Capitalism and Socialism. Both go to extremes. Neither nationalization of individual earnings nor allowing capital to fleece labour is a right solution of the question, though inequitable distribution of wealth, such as we see to-day, is at the root of the whole trouble. Nevertheless its equal distribution among all units of society is scarcely practicable. It would kill all incentive to work. Everyone must have something to live upon, but human society will never be without unfortunate people who come to poverty through causes beyond their control. Sometimes they become incapacitated, and charity alone can in such cases meet their need. Islam has always been free from the curse of unemployment. The Qur-án<sup>1</sup> gives a golden rule to meet all the ups and downs of the case. It orders the Muslim to pay what is equitably due to others, it orders him to pay them even more than is their due, and last of all, it recommends us to treat strangers in the way we treat our own relatives and kinsfolk.

USURY —“ Those who swallow down usury cannot arise except as one whom the devil has prostrated by (his) touch does rise. That is because they say, Trading is only like usury, and Allah has allowed trading and forbidden usury. To whomsoever then the admonition has come from his Lord, then he desists, he shall have what has already passed, and his affair is in the hands of Allah, and whoever returns (to it)—these are the inmates of the fire: they shall abide in it.” “ Allah does not bless usury, and He causes charitable deeds to prosper, and Allah does not love any ungrateful sinner.” “ Surely they who believe and do good deeds and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate—they shall have their reward from their Lord, and they shall

<sup>1</sup> “ Surely Allah enjoins the doing of justice and the doing of good (to others) and the giving to the kindred, and He forbids indecency and evil and rebellion, He admonishes you that you may be mindful.” (Qur-án, xvi 90.)

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

have no fear, nor shall they grieve " " O you who believe! be careful of (your duty to) Allah and relinquish what remains (due) from usury, if you are believers." " But if you do (it) not, then be apprised of war from Allah and His Apostle; and if you repent, then you shall have your capital; neither shall you make (the debtor) suffer loss, nor shall you be made to suffer loss " (Qur-án, ii 275-79 )

" O you who believe! do not devour usury, making additions again and again, and be careful of (your duty to) Allah, that you may be successful " " And guard yourselves against the fire which has been prepared for the unbelievers " (Qur-án, iii. 129-30 )

FILIAL PIETY—"And your Lord has commanded that you shall not serve (any) but Him and goodness to your parents. If either or both of them reach old age with you, say not to them (so much as) ' Ugh' nor chide them, and speak to them a generous word " " And make yourself submissively gentle to them with compassion, and say O my Lord! have compassion on them as they brought me up (when I was) little " (Qur-án, xvii 23-24 )

I do not deny the existence of such laws in other penal codes, but they are passed as man-made laws, and can be evaded, if one can break them without being detected. It is not the evil itself, but it is " being found out " that sometimes keeps a man away from sin. But if he believes in the existence of the Omnipresent and All-Knowing God, Who has to take account of all our actions and Who reads even the hidden thoughts of our hearts, we are compelled to shun all forbidden things. This explains the difference that exists in this respect between Muslims and others, and why the former, comparatively speaking, are far less guilty of wrongdoing than the non-Muslims, more especially as regards offences against decency.

## CHAPTER VI

### ETHICS OF WAR

To ensure peace we have often to disturb peace, and then the martial spirit that has been implanted in us by God for our safety comes into play. The protection of life and property is a common instinct, but it has often served as a pretext for oppression and tyranny. We are not free from inordinacy, and if we need something to put us on the right path, war is indispensable in order to restrain those who would otherwise be beyond our control. In other words, we need ethics of war, as war is one of the essentials of our civilization, and a Warrior-Prophet was needed to act as an exemplar in this respect. We fail to find any healthy principle of war in the Bible. The Israelite fighting aimed at the extinction of enemies, and sowed vengeance and rancour in human hearts. Though the Prince of Peace did not come for peace but for fire and sword, as he said himself, he asked his disciples to sell even their clothes in order to purchase weapons of war. His mind seems to have been agog with various other high-flown but contradictory ideas, but he could neither digest them nor reconcile them to each other. He left his followers, as it were, in a maze as regards military matters, and they began to walk knee-deep in human blood after him. They still do the same, though in a more refined manner, when any occasion arises.

Man, however, felt the need of some guidance here. The Hague Conference was constituted for this very object, but it failed miserably in its aims. The League of Nations has now begun to move in the same groove, but the intention of its

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

framers is not above suspicion. It is alleged that the institution has been formed to crush down the aspirations of the East towards self-determination. Europe already possesses enough of arms and ammunition to keep others under her subjection, and the proposal of disarmament in the League is simply to disable the East from recouping their shattered military *matériel*.

These institutions are, after all, human institutions. No man can be bound by another's injunction if it is at all likely to go against his interest. But if he finds himself so bound he tries to find means to get rid of the obligation. Treaties in Europe are meant for the wastepaper basket. They are honoured more in the breach than in the observance. We need a word from God Himself on this subject which may act as an article of our faith. This is not a mere theory. The history of warring peoples has proved it. Those who were once an embodiment of oppression and a curse to humanity on account of their prowess became as gentle as lambs under the salubrious influence of Divine Revelation, and won the title of the "Gentleman Soldier" from the world. They were once reckless in the matter of life, and wielded their swords ruthlessly, but these unscrupulous people became clean fighters under the teachings of God.

The country surrounding the Caspian Sea has produced fighting people from the very beginning. They were a nomad race in olden days, and filled others with terror. They were the Gogs and Magogs of the ancient days, and Darius of Persia had to build a wall between the Caucasian Mountains as a protection against their incursions. Later on, they appeared under the name of Scythians. Even India did not remain safe from their inroads at that time. They overran Europe under another name, in the days before Jesus they appeared in Europe as a formidable people in the shape of the Huns and Goths. Their ferociousness can be traced in

## ETHICS OF WAR

their present descendants India saw members of the same stock in Aryan invasions. They drove the ancient people of India to their mountain fastnesses. They would not leave even a breathing-space to their enemies. We often hear nowadays of the Hindus in India boasting of Aryan civilization, but if it inspired its people with the worst kind of hatred against the Untouchables—the residue of the Indian aborigines—it could not claim even a semblance of refinement and good manners. The Untouchables, even to-day, are not allowed, in India, many of the rights of humanity, their shadow was once shunned, and even now they are kept at a distance from others, and this is only a vestige of the tyranny that the ancient Aryans used to exercise towards those who were only guilty of owning India as their motherland.

The units of the same stock—the people living around the Caspian Sea—were the Tartars of Central Asia in pre-Islamic days. They overran the whole country and reduced it to ashes. They brought destruction and devastation wherever they went. The sound of their drum was a death-knell to those who feared their depredations. They adopted Buddhism for their faith, but the names of Halakoo and Changis still cause terror among the Caspian races. Afterwards they came under the influence of various religions. As the Tartars were Buddhists, the Aryans followed the Vedic persuasion while the Huns and Tartars became Christians, but no religious dispensation mitigated their ferocity or reformed their blood-thirsty nature.

Thus, the question of war has always remained a most difficult and intricate problem. War could neither be dispensed with in the interest of peace nor could it be pursued on the lines laid down in bygone days. The world had urgent need of a true reform in this respect, and it has come in the form of Islam.

Without making any introductory remarks, I approach

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

the subject directly and give the essentials of Islamic teachings in this matter.

Fighting, to satisfy the hankering after land or property belonging to others, has been repeatedly condemned in the Qur-án. But these motives have always induced fighting in the world from the very beginning, even to-day the same hankering makes civilized nations covetous of others. They may engineer various schemes and come with plausible pretexts, but cupidity and usurpation is at the bottom of all their movements. Islam, however, forbids all fighting for such objects. It allows war only under the same conditions for which the Creator endowed us with a martial spirit. Islam permits fighting, for three reasons.

(1) To restrain disturbances and keep every land free from other's incursions

(2) To defend life and property from others' hands.

(3) To enable every person to follow his religious convictions, whatever persuasion he may belong to

I need not emphasize the first two things, they are self-evident. I only quote the following verses from the Holy Qur-án on these points

(1) “. . . if you will not do it [fight], there will be in the land persecution and great mischief ” (viii. 73)

(2) “ Permission (to fight) is given to those upon whom war is made because they are oppressed, and most surely Allah is well able to assist them ”; “ Those who have been expelled from their homes without a just cause . . . ” (xxii. 39-40).

The third object of war is, however, a vexed question. It has furnished enemies of Islam with a pretext for carping against the faith, though the Holy Qur-án has given the most desirable and humane teachings on the subject.

“ No compulsion in Religion ” is the universal immunity given by the Qur-án to an adherent of every faith, no matter

## ETHICS OF WAR

what its form Islam came to establish freedom of conscience and action in general, but particularly in religion. A Muslim is bound to wage war against any persons, whether of his own kin and kith and religion or not, if they interfere with the beliefs even of a non-Muslim. This state of affairs in religion has been called "Faith for God" in the Qur-án, that is to say, everyone must be allowed to choose his own faith and worship his God in the manner he thinks right. It is a disturbance of this state of things if a Muslim has to draw the sword against any person, Muslim or otherwise, who violates the above conditions. Even a Freethinker could take no exception to this Golden Rule. Thus liberty of conscience was a thing unknown before Islam. People used to believe in the Divine origin of their respective faiths. They would neither allow others to come within their own fold nor would they allow themselves to contemplate their own co-religionists as renegades from their faith. Islam gave the required permission, and in so doing (if the word be permitted) complemented civilization. The feeling in Islam for religious freedom is so strong that a Muslim is enjoined to act as a policeman, as it were, in the protection of all religious houses. For example, a Muslim is ordered to protect a Christian church even from a Muslim attack. The Qur-án is too clear on the point to allow of any other conduct.

" . . . And had there not been Allah's repelling some people by others, certainly there would have been pulled down cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques in which God's name is much remembered; and surely Allah will help him who helps His cause . . ." (xxii. 40).

In this verse the Qur-án identifies the maintenance of religious houses of every faith with the Cause of God. It is to be noted that Muslims are ordered to sacrifice their lives not only to save their own mosques but the religious houses of other peoples as well. The civilized world, with Christian



## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

notions of intolerance lurking in its breast, is still far from holding the noble principle thus enunciated in the Holy Qur-án. And there is yet another lesson in Islam to be learned by Christian rulers of other nations. A Muslim king is enjoined by his religion to help in the maintenance of others' temples and shrines. This was done by the Emperor Aurungzeb, in Benares. It is not a solitary and unique example in the history of Islam, but I have advisedly chosen the above two names (a ruler and a town) for certain reasons. Modern historians of India—whether European or Indian—under Western influence have, for political reasons, concocted lie after lie to discredit Muslim rule in the eyes of the Hindus, and the said Moghul Emperor has been chosen as a fit subject for all their carpings, who, they say, demolished most of the Hindu temples and abolished their rites in Benares, one of the chief centres of the Hindu religion. The real case is just the reverse. The Emperor gave big estates and endowments for the maintenance of Hindu temples in Benares. Fortunately for us the custodians of these temples hold "firmans" (orders) of Aurungzeb entitling them to such estates, otherwise they would have been confiscated by the British Raj. I have photographs of those "firmans" with me. Kashmir, at present a Hindu State, maintains a large number of Hindu temples out of the estates created by the Moghul Rulers for them, and most of the endowments came from Aurungzeb. Even to-day I find the same Muslim liberality in Hyderabad (Deccan) and in the State of Bhopal, where a large portion of the State revenue goes to maintain non-Muslim shrines, including Christian and Zoroastrian churches.

Even in time of war a Muslim soldier is forbidden to touch an alien's house of worship. He has to spare the life of religious teachers.<sup>1</sup> It is a pity, therefore, to find that the

<sup>1</sup> The words of Abū Bakr, the immediate successor of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, read as follows

. . . Let there be no perfidy nor falsehood in your treaties with

## ETHICS OF WAR

civilized nations of to-day, when engaged in the Great War, could not observe the above rule. Churches were demolished, mostly in France and Belgium, and priests were murdered in the war.

Muhammad, as I have said before, appeared as a Warrior-Prophet, not only to protect his own faith and the lives of his followers from the ruthless tyranny of his adversaries, but to lay down rules of guidance for the coming world in the matter of war. The story of the Great War is palpable proof that man-made rules are either insufficient to meet the situation or can be set at naught by those whose interests are opposed to them. Muhammad had to fight several campaigns and thus left tracks on the pages of history for our guidance. He always respected treaties made with his enemies. I will now attempt briefly to describe the events of his life in this connection, and give the beautiful Qur-ânic injunctions to which they gave rise.

From the commencement of his ministry, Muhammad, with his small band of followers, was put to a series of unimaginable persecutions for full thirteen years. The enemies of Islam left no stone unturned in striving to nip it in the bud. One's hair would stand on end if one were to try even to imagine what was meted out to early Muslims in Arabia. What Jesus was contemplating from his enemies, when he delivered his well-known Sermon on the Mount to his people, became materialized in the days of the Prophet. Resistance to evil on such an occasion was only to invite destruction, and was tantamount to an act of suicide, but to act on homilies pronounced by Jesus in this respect—for example, to turn the other cheek to a buffeting enemy—was only to emasculate the spirit of manliness from his people. So Muhammad ordered

your enemies, be faithful in all things, proving yourself ever upright and noble, and maintaining your word and promise truly. *Do not disturb the quiet of the monk or hermit and destroy not their abodes, but inflict the rigour of death upon all who shall refuse the conditions you may impose upon them*—(*The Law Quarterly Review*, 1908)

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

them either to bear the persecution with patience but never reject their principles, or to leave the country and remove themselves from the scene of affliction, but never to submit to resistance in such a way as to reject their own beliefs. Some of his followers fled to Abyssinia, but the time came when the enemy's persecutions exhausted all patience. The Prophet asked his followers to leave the country. In the thirteenth year of his ministry only a few of his disciples remained with him in Mecca. The enemy now conspired to kill the Prophet himself. This caused him to effect his own escape. Some few months before his flight to Medina, he received the following revelation from Above:

"Permission (to fight) is given to those upon whom war is made because they are oppressed, and most surely Allah is well able to assist them", "Those who have been expelled from their homes without a just cause except that they say: Our Lord is Allah . ." (xxii 39-40)

This revelation was, in a way, a warning to the Muslims that they would soon be attacked by their enemies. Hardly one year had passed after the flight of the Prophet to Medina when an army of a thousand mighty archers marched from Mecca to crush down the new dispensation. The Prophet heard of it. He could not count on the people of Medina, with the exception of the few who had joined the ranks of Islam. With a small band of three hundred and thirteen, most of whom were young men in their teens, the Prophet left Medina to meet the coming army. The two forces met at Badr, some thirty miles from Medina. Most of the Meccan army were killed and few of the rest remained to carry the bad news to the Meccans, who were enraged at the defeat. Their fears drove them to another campaign against the Prophet; this time their force numbered three thousand. The Prophet had to leave Medina again to meet them. Muhammad could not collect more than nine hundred men to back

## ETHICS OF WAR

him at Ohud, the scene of the second battle. Though the Muslims were not victorious, the Meccans gained no advantage. The latter now determined to crush Islam for ever. They entered into a confederacy with other Arabian tribes. They raised a force of ten thousand men and besieged Medina suddenly. No regular fight took place, but one night a severe sandstorm suddenly arose. It extinguished all the lights of the Meccans and blew down their tents. They lost their presence of mind and fled from the scene in wretched plight. Though the enemies of Islam could not make any other alliance after this siege of Medina, the event roused a war-spirit in the whole of Arabia. Muslims had enemies all round them and it was on this occasion that most of the following injunctions were given to them in the Holy Qur-án. No one could speak too highly in praise of these temperate teachings.

“And prepare against them what force you can and horses tied at the frontier, to frighten thereby the enemy of Allah and your enemy and others beside them, whom you do not know (but) Allah knows them, and whatever thing you will spend in Allah’s way, it will be paid back to you fully and you shall not be dealt with unjustly” (viii. 60).

“Say to those who disbelieve, if they desist, that which is past shall be forgiven to them, and if they return, then what has happened to the ancients has already passed.

“And fight with them until there is no more persecution and religion should be only for Allah, but if they desist, then surely Allah sees what they do.

“And if they turn back, then know that Allah is your Patron; most excellent is the Patron and most excellent the Helper” (viii. 38-40).

“If you demanded a judgment, the judgment has then indeed come to you; and if you desist, it will be better for you; and if you turn back (to fight), We (too) shall turn back, and your forces shall avail you nothing, though they may be

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

many, and (know) that Allah is with the believers " (viii. 19).

All these verses allow fighting only in the case of self-defence. They clearly provide that as soon as the enemy desists from fighting, Muslims should not continue the battle, though it may be to their own disadvantage, as the following quotation says " And if they incline to peace, then incline to it and trust to Allah " . . "And if they intend to deceive you—then surely Allah is sufficient for you . . " (vii. 61, 62).

Many of the tribes now entered into treaties of defence with the Prophet. The main object of most of them was to deceive the Muslims, as the Qur-án says, " Those with whom you make an agreement, then they break their agreement every time and they do not guard (against punishment) " (viii. 56).

Every conciliatory term was offered to non-Muslims to bring the war-spirit to an end, but no sooner did they get some advantage over the Prophet than they paid no regard to the ties of relationship or to those of covenant. The continuance of such relations endangered the very lives of the Muslims. They mixed with those whom they regarded as their friends, under covenants, but they, the Muslims, were often cheated, and a large number of them were killed. The only alternative left to them was to declare war. Many were under no obligation to the people who proved to be untrue to their engagements, so the following proclamation was made

" (This is a declaration of) immunity by Allah and His Apostle towards those of the idolaters with whom you made an agreement.

" So go about in the land for four months and know that you cannot weaken Allah and that Allah will bring disgrace to the unbelievers.

" And an announcement from Allah and His Apostle to the people on the day of the greater pilgrimage that Allah and His Apostle are free from liability to the idolaters; therefore,

## ETHICS OF WAR

if you repent, it will be better for you, and if you turn back, then know that you will not weaken Allah; and announce painful chastisement to those who disbelieve—

“Except those of the idolaters with whom you made an agreement, then they have not failed you in anything and have not backed up any one against you, so fulfil their agreement to the end of the term, surely Allah loves those who are careful (of their duty)

“So when the sacred months have passed away, then slay the idolaters wherever you find them, and take them captives and besiege them and lie in wait for them in every ambush, then if they repent and keep up prayer and pay the poor rate, leave their way free to them, surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful

“And if one of the idolaters seeks protection from you, grant him protection till he hears the word of Allah, then make him attain his place of safety, this is because they are a people who do not know” (ix 1-6)

The fourth verse of the above quotation clears the whole situation and comes as a saving clause in favour of those who kept the treaties. The punishment mentioned in verse 5 of the above quotation refers only to those who could not come under the above saving clause. The hostilities were resumed against the breakers of the treaties who continued to persecute the Muslims. But though the former had no right to be saved, having forfeited their lives and liberty, yet they were given a chance of life in verse 6.

This verse has, however, given rise to some misconception. It appears to have suggested the ludicrous charge commonly brought against Islam. It is alleged that the early Muslims offered the sword or Islam to the non-Muslims of the world. “They were to be converted to Islam or destroyed by the sword.” So says a critic of Islam. Could there be a clearer example of the distortion which the Qur-án has to meet at

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

the hands of the defamers of Islam than the one seen here? It is wickedness to draw such a conclusion from a verse which has verses 4 and 6 before and after it. The former verse makes exceptions in the case of such idolaters as remained true to their agreements with the Muslims, and the latter gives a chance of life to those who had no right to live on the earth after such perfidy against Islam. The verse, on the other hand, leaves no doubt that the idolaters and the non-Muslims were not to be slain on account of their religions. In the words of Sale, as he notes under the very verse, "The Muslims had to give such idolaters a safe conduct that they may return home again, in case they should not think fit to embrace Mohammedanism." I have failed to find such liberal treatment of a man, an enemy, by his adversary anywhere else. I will refer here my readers to a few more verses of the Holy Qur-án which will, I fancy, decide the question of the place of war in Islam. They are verses 12, 13, and 14 of chapter xi. That the Muslim wars in those days were against those who tried to extirpate Islam from the surface of the earth, and not against the non-Muslims of the world, appears clearly enough from verse 123 of the chapter on Immunity. "O you who believe! fight those of the unbelievers who are near to you and let them find in you hardness, and know that Allah is with those who guard (against evil) "

The commandment is not general and should act as a rule of guidance in interpreting all the injunctions relating to Muslim fighting.

In the above quotations I have also given all the verses from the Qur-án which have from time to time furnished a weapon against Islam to adverse camps. A critic ought to be just and fair in his comments. I wonder how it fits the mouth of a learned and honest Christian missionary (most of the adverse critics of Islam being found among that class) to select some stray verse from the Qur-án to suit his evil inten-

## ETHICS OF WAR

tions, and ignore the verses that precede or succeed his favourite quotation

In short, the world has always needed good ethics of war, and Islam came to meet the demand. It prohibited all such fightings as were waged for the sake of gaining possession of the land and property of others, or was entered into in the name of religion. Islam came to maintain the peace of the world, as its very name shows, and permitted the unsheathing of the sword in defence of life and property and religion, where they were disturbed without any just cause.



## CHAPTER VII

# DIVINE ATTRIBUTES AND HUMAN CHARACTER

RELIGION, in Islam, was not merely the worship of God, with forms and ceremonies. Its chief object was the moulding of man's character. The worship of God, under Islam, is to follow such of His ways as are exhibited in the processes of Nature. Natural theology is in fact a commentary on Qur-ánic theology. It speaks of God—Whose attributes, when possessed by us, make us good citizens. We, of course, know nothing of God. He is inconceivable, but if the working of Nature has proved His existence from the point of view of science, it has also displayed some of His prominent attributes. The Holy Qur-án collected them in its pages and called them the Excellent Names of God, and these are no other than His Ways in the governance of the universe. No one can object to our following them, for if we did not civilization would for ever remain incomplete. Islam makes our initiation into the Divine ways an essential part of our religion. If we follow Him our faith, so the Qur-án says, becomes perfected, and I do not see how, in the interests of good citizenship, even the most agnostic mind dare deviate from the requirements of these Names. As rulers of the universe, we need knowledge and wisdom, greatness of mind, excellence of character and purity from defects and error; we want ability and efficiency to make the things necessary for our sustenance; and we must know how to control the various forces of Nature. These things should come within the scope of our ability. The Qur-án makes it

## DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

our religion, and for this reason it sums them up as Divine Attributes, because almost all of us make God our exemplar and regard it as our religious duty to follow Him. They provide us with the highest code of morality and ethics, under the name of Divine Attributes, and Order in its most sublime form.

First of all, I speak of knowledge, which, in fact, comprehends all other things. If we attain knowledge, all other things will come to us. The Qur-án enumerates various ways of acquiring knowledge and makes reference to them under Seven Names of God. They are as follows

(1) " 'Ālimu 'l-Ghayb " One who knows hidden and unseen things. Our knowledge of secrets cannot hope to come to Divine perfection in this respect, but our learning and attainments in the various branches of science will enable us to read the unknown things of nature. Many hidden things can come to our knowledge through our calculation, our mental eyes can perceive that which the naked eye cannot, and our mental eye can read many astronomical truths. We can read the thoughts of others and master clairvoyance by cultivating our occult powers. The Qur-án speaks of them. In fact, we worship " 'Ālimu 'l-Ghayb " when we try to follow this Qur-ānic injunction. This is what the Book calls the Adoration of Allah.

(2) " 'Ālim " All-Knowing. The second Name of God. One whose knowledge comprehends every other thing. One who possesses knowledge as his inherent quality. The Holy Name makes it obligatory on us to master the various sciences and perfect ourselves in all branches of learning.

(3) " Latif. " One who possesses more minute insight into other things; one who knows how to unravel the most complicated and intricate problems of life. In short, the worshipper of " Latif " is one who reads things that do not come within the knowledge of others.

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

(4) "Hakim." The word is derived from the infinitive, "Hikmat," which means science and wisdom. It also means the using of things in the most efficient and best way. Only one who knows the properties of things can achieve this quality.

(5) "Basir" One who sees things with an open observant eye, whose observation and knowledge of his surroundings enable him to come to right conclusions concerning them. The word is derived from "Basirat," which means to see things in order to acquire knowledge and experience.

(6) "Samī'" All-Hearing. One who hears every sound and voice uttered in the space of the universe. We cannot achieve the Divine ability to hear, but the telegraph, wireless messages, telepathy, clairaudience, and other methods of hearing are some of our achievements in this respect. Espionage is an unpleasant thing, but a department whose duty it is to detect crime is a necessity for the administration of justice.

(7) "Khabir" One who possesses all the news of the world and is kept informed of everything that takes place on the earth, in fact, his sources of information know no limit.

Though possession of these seven forms of knowledge are the religious duty of every votary of Allah, making him a true Muslim, they are also in the highest degree necessary for those who aspire to bring other nations under their rule, we ought to know what is really going on in various countries. The Qur-án, when speaking of the Kingdom of God, makes this a special requirement of the rulers of the earth. It should not be forgotten that the Qur-án does not speak highly of God simply to extol Him, but the Book makes mention of those of His ways which should also appertain to us in the management of our mundane affairs.

Western nations can claim to possess a portion of this power and knowledge, which gives them a certain superiority in the world. The Qur-án also suggests some of the ways that

## DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

will help us to perfect that necessary knowledge They are as follows

(1) The cultivation of the art of reading and writing It was, as it were, something unknown before Islam In fact, our attention was drawn to it in the very first revelation of Muhammad, which, when speaking of God, says: "Read in the Name of God . Who teaches man to write with the pen, Who teaches him things he knew not before " (xcvi. 1-4).

(2) To keep the ear open, to make a right judgment on everything we hear (xvi. 65)

(3) To remember things for our future guidance (xvi 13).

(4) Observation of the universe (xvi 15-16)

(5) To study history and biographies that we may learn therefrom (xliii 6-8)

(6) To travel with an eye observant of the relics and remains of those nations that rose and fell in days gone by (vi 11).

(7) To learn lessons from hardships and trials (iii. 139-141).

(8) To study the Divine Revelations (ii 4).

(9) Contemplation and meditation

The Qur-án speaks of four ways of contemplation The Book uses four different words to convey each sort of contemplation, and the words have shades of difference in their meanings; but unfortunately languages other than Arabic do not possess appropriate synonyms for them. I will, however, try to explain them here These four aspects of contemplation are called (1) "Tafaqquh "; (2) "Tadabbur ", (3) "Tafakkur "; (4) "Ta'aqqul "

"Tafaqquh " means to use all organs of knowledge to acquire the truth of things. Those who did not do so have been described in the Holy Qur-án as blind, deaf, and dumb. They have also been condemned as worse than animals. The Qur-án speaks<sup>1</sup> of those who use their physical organs aright

<sup>1</sup> Chaps ii 155, 156, 157, iv 78, xlviii 15, lxiix 12.

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

and then make a right judgment on them and add each new experience to their knowledge

“Tadabbur” to observe things, or acquire knowledge about them that may enable us to find out the object that has brought them into existence, in other words, to understand the ins and outs of things that come within our cognizance.

“Tafakkur.” This refers to our constantly pondering over a matter to ascertain what will enable us to reach the root of it. It also refers to our observation of Nature in order to find out the ways of God, under which things come into existence and exhibit their properties. “Tafakkur” is the first and necessary process of a mind engaged in scientific research. In fact, Tafakkur means the observation and study of things in the universe to find out the laws of Nature. This second characteristic is referred to in the fourth aspect of contemplation, which is “Ta’aqul.” It means to acquire that kind of knowledge about things around us which will enable us to make a right use of them in life. It demands from us not only a knowledge of the properties of things but also of the proportions to which they are to be used. Our knowledge under this aspect should qualify us to make use of things for the purpose for which they were intended. How can one take exception to a religion that makes the acquisition of knowledge under these nine headings an article of faith?

I have read many religious books and writings of eminent authors on the subject, but I fail to find the above nine points tabulated in any book. Again, the Qur-án does not read homilies in this respect. It is a special feature of the book to elucidate its truths and principles by referring to the various manifestations of Nature; it then draws lessons for its reader so that he may follow its principles, and admonishes him to do so. Nature does not exhibit these forms of knowledge as possessed by its Creator, but they should be acquired by man if he wishes to bring the universe to perfection.

## DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

Next to knowledge comes greatness in its different forms that are within our scope. Power, strength, might, eminence, superiority are synonyms for greatness, but though they are necessary for man they are liable to abuse. Unfortunately we often use them to harm others. This quality, therefore, required proper guidance, and that guidance came in the following Names of God

(1) "Al-'Ālī", (2) "Al-'Alā", (3) "Al-Muta'āl"; (4) "Al-'Azīm", (5) "Al-'Azīz", (6) "Al-Kabīr", (7) "Al-Mutakabbir", (8) "Al-Jabbār", (9) "Al-Qahhār"; (10) "Al-Qawīyy", (11) "Al-Qadīr", (12) "Al-Muqtadīr", (13) "Al-Qādir", (14) "Al-Jalīl", (15) "Al-Majīd"

Other languages, English included, are not so rich as Arabic. Their paucity of vocabulary disables them to convey through their words the different shades of *greatness* that we find in the above *Names*. I will, however, try to give some explanation. The first three Names in the above category come from the same root, "Alw," which means "greatness." The word "Ālī" or "Alā" refers to the Highest Eminence that may come within one's reach, so much so that there remains no other degree of greatness. Like "Azīm" and "Kabīr," the fourth and fifth Names, all of the first five Names are more or less generic in their connotation. They comprehend all forms of greatness. "Azīm" and "Kabīr," however, come next in intensity to "Ālī" and those derived from the same root. They refer to greatness as an inherent quality. They also include an idea of comparison. "Azīm" is one who is held great in the estimation of others. "Kabīr" speaks of the greatness belonging to someone in comparison with others. "Al-'Azīz" is a word very rich in significance, which may include mighty, potent, powerful, or strong in its absolute sense. It is the direct opposite to everything that is low and mean. It also means noble, honourable, glorious, or illustrious. On the other hand, it means one who is invin-

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

cible and rough in his dealings with his enemies. But wisdom and knowledge are also the necessary adjuncts of "‘Azīz," i.e. one who uses his power and strength with wisdom and knowledge. "Al-Mutakabbir," the seventh of the above-mentioned Names, refers to the measure of our excellence in goodness, beauty, and sublimity, excluding altogether the idea of pride and vanity. How strange it is that the very word, when used in Hindustānī, signifies haughty, overbearing, and proud, yet in Arabic it means that Mutakabbir should neither be proud nor overbearing nor vainglorious in the display of his power. "Al-Jabbār" and "Al-Qahhār," the eighth and ninth Names in the above list, signify the power and influence which is exercised by their owners in bringing others under their control and making the latter subservient to the former's will. Such prominence should be accompanied by firmness and justice. It should help the subordinate to bring out all that is best in himself. The subordinate may, for instance, be compared to a blind force and energy. The ruler, the possessor of this particular kind of greatness, should guide that energy into its proper channels. "Al-Qawīyy" is one who possesses both physical and spiritual strength in the highest degree, and uses them for the good of others. "Al-Qadīr" and "Al-Muqtadīr" and "Al-Qādir," the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth, come from the same root, meaning might and power. But "Al-Muqtadīr" refers to the possession of such power as enables man to face the hard things in life and succeed in campaigns that demand ability, perseverance, and courage. He encounters and surmounts all the difficulties that may arise in the performance of great things. "Al-Qadīr" refers to a man's highest achievements in wisdom and knowledge which he uses with power enough to surmount all the opposition that may come in his way. "Al-Jalīl" (14) refers to such works performed by us as induce others to praise and glorify us for our achievements in the world. It necessitates the doing of

## DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

something that may excite the wonder and surprise of others. "Al-Majid" makes generosity and liberality of mind a special feature of the man. He is "Majid" whose work is profitable to others.

It should, however, not be forgotten that these words sometimes convey the evil aspect of greatness. Nevertheless, when used as attributes of God they refer to something good. For this reason the definite article "Al" is used as a prefix before every such word. The article indicates that the word has been used as a Divine Attribute. Greatness, as I have said before, is a necessary accompaniment of our character, but if it is not exercised according to the requirements of the Divine Attributes, it brings brutal forces into play and causes oppression and tyranny in the world. Greatness is a blessing, but it becomes a curse to anyone with whom it goes beyond its prescribed limits. The Qur-ānic attributes of God specify these limits, which, being observed, contribute to universal happiness and become a necessary constituent of our civilization.

After knowledge and power we require all attainments that may enable us to leave a memory behind us that may remain ever-living and green. We must do something to secure self-determination in its best form to the race to which we belong. Those among us who have been blessed with a position to rule others, such as kings, or persons possessing sovereign political authority, stand in special need of such qualities. The Qur-ān, however, has not left us without an exemplar for our imitation in this respect. "Al-Hayy" (Ever-living) and "Al-Qayyūm" (Self-subsisting) are two Names of God, and the well-known "Throne Verse" in chapter ii of the Qur-ān gives the following characters of God as such:

"Allah is He besides whom there is no god, the Ever-living, the Self-subsisting by whom all subsist; *slumber does not overtake Him nor sleep*; whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His, who is he that can *intercede*



## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

*with Him but by His permission?* He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they cannot comprehend any thing out of His knowledge except what He pleases; *His knowledge* extends over the heavens and the earth, and the preservation of them both *tires Him not*, and He is the *Most High, the Great*'' (11. 255)

This verse speaks of seven qualities (in words which I have italicized) which should belong to those who aspire to keep their memory green. The quotation refers, first, to an unusual vigilance of awakening where slumber does not overtake a person. In our case it does not mean that we should deprive ourselves of that blessing of God, sleep, which is essential to our mortal existence, but that those who wish to attain an exalted position should ever remain watchful over our affairs, whether these be large landed proprietors or captains of industry. The verse, secondly, speaks of the extensiveness of the country that is under one's rule. In an individual case it may mean large estates or extensive business. The following five qualities, however, should attach to rulers as well as to those in positions of responsibility. These are as follows:

(1) Accessibility to intercession. No favouritism to be allowed in the management of affairs: no one to be encouraged to intercede in the interests of those who do not deserve any attention or regard.

(2) Vastness of knowledge concerning everything.

(3) Secrecy of affairs from those unconcerned, only such to be taken into confidence as are tried and indispensable.

(4) Not to feel fatigued in the preservation or maintenance of things necessary to existence. One so placed should always remain active in the discharge of his duties.

(5) Possession of greatness in every form.

The verse is a lesson for the rising nations in the East. Western people possess those qualities and therein lies the secret of their success. If the Almighty and Omnipotent God

## DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

has to remain ever-living and watchful and untiring in the rule of the universe, what of us who are decidedly weak and powerless? If the Qur-án speaks thus of God, it is only to inspire us to do these things

Here I may quote another verse from the Holy Qur-án that gives such attributes of God as belong to a king. It means that those who have been given the responsibility of rule and government should walk humbly with the Lord, imitating His attributes. The verse is as follows

“ He is Allah, besides whom there is no God, the King, the Holy, and free from all defects, the Maintainer of Peace, the Granter of Securities, the Mighty, the Subduer of others to His Will, the Possessor of every greatness, Glory be to Allah from what they set up with Him ” (lix 23)

The quotation is too eloquent to need any commentary. I will, however, say a word concerning two of the attributes mentioned. First, “As-Salām ”—The maintainer of peace. It does not only require a king to maintain peace among his own people, but to keep peace with every other person, whether among his subjects or not. In fact, he should help to maintain universal peace in the world. The second attribute is “ Al-Jabbār ”—The Supreme Being who subdues others to His Will and makes their actions subservient thereto. This subjection on the part of the ruled should always be conducive to their own good and not made a means of pampering their rulers' self-indulgence. Unfortunately, subject-races under foreign rulers are always exploited to satisfy the extravagances of the ruling nations, who seek their strength in the others' weakness.

“ Al-Jabbār ” refers to that kind of ascendancy that prohibits people from indulging in things that are injurious to their own interests and compels them to remain on the right path.

Now I will speak of such of the Divine Attributes as may guide us to success in our daily occupations. Big concerns

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

often fail on account of some error on the part of those who manage them. It is the duty of a revealed Book from God to guide men to a successful career in their earthly affairs as well as to spiritual excellence. I have said many times before that religion does not come from God merely to supply us with things that have no bearing on our daily doings. Our Creator has equipped us with faculties which come into play when we are engaged in the management of mundane business affairs. We have also been given various appetites and desires, which set in motion the whole machinery of civilization, and if God has bestowed upon us the power to perform great things in this life He will surely teach us the morals and ethics which will enable us to accomplish the great task. In this respect the Divine Attribute, "Rabb," is most comprehensive in its significance. It means the Creator, the Nourisher, the Maintainer, the Law-Giver, the Regularizer, the Bringer of Things to perfection. It appertains, without doubt, to Him Who is Omnipotent. "And His Command when He intends anything, is only to say to it, 'Be,' and so it is" (Qur-án xxxvi 82). But He is pleased to work out His Will in accordance with methods which should be ours when attending to our daily business. All the attributes of God disclosed in the pages of the Qur-án are meant to serve this same purpose. They are as specimens for our imitation. Within the scope of its meaning, the word "Rabb" includes some twenty attributes that explain the different methods adopted by God when He acts as Rabb in the universe. I give them here in the order in which I presume them to work, when things are created and brought to perfection.

"Al-Bārī"—Maker; "Al-Badī'"—He Who creates things out of nothing. We cannot make things out of nothing, but the two attributes in us, the spirit of invention and the urge to discovery, enable us to organize great things and find out means and processes hitherto unknown.

## DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

“Al-Mussawwir”—the Fashioner He Who designs things beforehand He performs them and then fashions them in His mind and puts them, as it were, on canvas Before we engage ourselves in any task we should have a clear idea as to what we have to do We should estimate and design things before beginning to put them into concrete shape.

“Al-Khāliq”—the Creator of things from other things; He who combines different things so that they make a new thing. Such work we ourselves undertake Nay, our sole task is either to unite things or separate them from each other and therein lies all our efficiency. But before we set to work we ought to acquaint ourselves with all the qualities inherent in other things, and for this we have to follow three further Attributes First, “Al-Bātin”—He Who knows the inner or intrinsic state of things Secondly, “Al-Muhsī”—He Who comprehends all that is in other things and the different measures in which things act Thirdly, “Al-Wāḥid”—He Who knows where to find the things necessary for His work. Unless we qualify ourselves with the proper knowledge of the materials we have to work in, and their whereabouts, and know the proportions in which they are to be used we cannot hope to achieve success. Then come three other Attributes, “Al-Jāmi’,” “Al-Jabbār,” and “Al-Fattāh”; the first means Combiner and Collector of things that lie separate from each other “Al-Jabbār” is one Who compels others to work according to His will Similarly, the man who works under us should do so according to our direction, and we should use our material in such a way that it may work out our design Thirdly, “Al-Fattāh”—The Opener of hidden qualities. We should know how the things we use will exhibit their inherent qualities according to our design.

“Al-Hādī”—He Who puts others on the right path. Whether in regard to the material we use, or to the people who serve under us, we must see that they function as they

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

should. "Ar-Raqīb"—He Who watches keenly We should mark vigilantly the progress of things, with a view to helping them on and protecting them from harm and danger. In fact we have here to follow three other Divine Attributes, that is to say, "Al-Mānī"—One Who keeps things separate and prevents them from harming each other. We must do the same even when dealing with lifeless material. Things possess properties contrary to each other and unless vigilantly dealt with are liable to do immense harm "Al-Qayyūm"—He Who is the maintainer of things and enables them to subsist. We must act in this way concerning everything we use in our business in order to preserve it and keep it in working order

In fact, the word "Rabb" is very rich in its meanings, and here I would refer to one in particular "Rabb" is He Who brings the faculties latent in things to perfection and looks to the completion of the work in His Hand All these Attributes inspire us with the desire for full knowledge of the properties of everything in the universe, and the ways under which they are disclosed It also demands from us that perseverance and constancy which alone can secure perfection and bring success to our business In this connection I may refer to two other names, "Al-Mubdi"—He Who creates things for the first time, and "Al-Mu'id,"—He Who knows how to repeat the creation This means that we should not engage ourselves haphazard in our occupation We ought to know precisely what we intend to do, how to begin a thing properly and how to repeat the process if necessary.

Let my readers, especially the Muslims among them, ponder all these attributes of God They have been revealed to us only to guide us in our daily life. Let us examine, for example, the process we adopt in our work. Do we take heed of all the caution and vigilance disclosed in these attributes? We often encounter failure and but rarely achieve success, and the

## DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

reason of it is that we do not act in accordance with the Divine ways.

It would not be out of place if I refer to the first five verses of chapter lxxix of the Holy Qur-án, which lay down the principles that would carry us to the acme of success in every walk of life.

These verses speak of the calamity that must overtake those who do not make proper use of their time and opportunities. The morals taught in these verses are very extensive in their application. They, in fact, apply to every activity in all departments of life. The verses run as follows:

- (1) "Consider those that incline (to their business) fully,"
- (2) "And those that go forth (to it) briskly (or lively)."
- (3) "And those that swim (in it) swimmingly."
- (4) "Then those who are foremost going ahead."
- (5) "Then those who regulate the affairs."

Every beginner in a business naturally aspires to reach the height of success in his business. It is not difficult to do so, but we do not go the right way to work about it. The first verse, however, speaks of what is necessary for us all if we are to achieve efficiency in our work. The words are very eloquent—"An-Nāzī'āti Gharqa." I translate "Nāzī'ati" as those who incline. The word comes from Naza', meaning strife or dispute. The other word—"gharqa"—means to be drawn. The verse says, that when we choose anything for our occupation we should incline to it wholly and solely, as if we are drawn into it and have put other things aside; as though we had no concern with them. The fifth verse in the above quotation refers to that which ought to be our ideal in such a case. A man should become expert in his affairs and be in a position to regulate them in a masterly manner, so that he may be deemed an authority on the subject.

If we are really anxious to reach this climax we must

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

become absorbed in our work and engage ourselves in it so wholeheartedly as to pay no attention to anything else. It may seem hard at first and a sort of drudgery, but we must keep on giving our sole attention to our work until we begin to enjoy it. We should approach it briskly, and take a lively interest in it. We must not cease striving until our work has become our sole pleasure. This is the meaning of the second verse. But we must go further. We must attain such a degree of experience in it that our work may become as effortless as the swimming of a fish in a river. The verse refers to the agility and facility that we must achieve in our business; but this is not the final goal, for we must exert ourselves still more until we become pre-eminent in our work. We must outstrip others so that we may forge ahead of all. It is then that we become an admitted authority among our compeers, who will come to us for guidance.

The whole universe exhibits in her work the above-mentioned five qualities. This is the true theology that we read in the pages of Nature, and religion is not worthy of its name if it fails to goad us towards such principles of life. The Creator of the Universe seems to remain ever busy in the work of His Creation. It is neither cumbersome to Him nor does it tire Him, and we must be like Him if we wish to attain success.

Here again I draw the attention of my readers to the fact that revelation should read us such lessons as may set our faculties to work, but it should not teach doctrines that tend to damp our zeal and enthusiasm in worldly matters. Those who say that revelation has not furthered our civilization should ponder over these verses. Do they not galvanize our energies and ensure us success if we act upon them? The lesson has been read to us in the Book from God, and it is our religious duty to act upon it. Herein lies its force in persuading its votaries to follow it submissively. My Muslim readers

## DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

should especially consider that the Qur-án demands of them that they should attend to their worldly affairs diligently. They should not forget that, in the eyes of Islam, it is the true spirit of religion which bids men remain unconcerned with the life of this world.

Before I conclude this part of my subject I will refer to some of the names of God which inspired the early Muslims to discover certain prominent Laws of Nature which became the bases of their scientific researches. Here again, I begin with the word " Rabb "

The attribute means first of all Creator, but it also signifies the " fostering of a thing in such a manner as to make it attain one condition after another until it reaches its goal of completion " This signification of the word is not an accidental discovery on my part. The word has been used in this sense in Arabic literature before Islam, as Imām Rāghib says in his lexicon of Qur-ānic words, written many centuries ago. The theory of evolution came to Darwin's mind in a very hazy way in the middle of the last century, and Spencer put it into its present shape, yet the law was known to the Arābs, as their writings show; and it was this Divine Attribute, " Rabb," that drew their attention to the law of evolution as working in Nature. It is impossible to exaggerate the service that the discovery of this law has done towards the furtherance of science and civilization, but the actual law itself has been explained most eloquently in the first Name of God given in the Qur-án. In the exposition of this attribute, the Book, in many places, refers to the various grades in which things in creation have to reach their perfection. The Book also says in most forcible language that the *laws of God are unchangeable*. I think this disclosure as to the unchangeability of the law is much more important than any other discovery. All branches of science have been based upon this principle. In fact, law itself signifies a system which remains always un-



## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

changed. No one can then belittle the authority of the Qur-án when it reveals the importance of the above-mentioned feature of law. There are two other Names, however, which should receive special consideration from those engaged in scientific research "Az-Zāhır" and "Al-Bātin" These Names are among those Divine Attributes which help us chiefly in our investigations of the matter around us "Al-Bātin" means One Who knows the hidden properties of things in Nature. "Az-Zāhır" is He Who reveals them These two actions are unceasingly at work in the universe, and they teach us that everything in Nature is a repository of latent faculties that should be brought to light It is for us to make researches for the discovery of these hidden things, and for us to find out laws that may help us to subdue such latent qualities to our service These two things, concealment and manifestation, are responsible for all our scientific investigations They induced the early Muslims to read the secrets of Nature, and thus enrich the world with wealth undreamed of before.

God has been declared in the Holy Qur-án to be the Originator of everything, and He is the One to Whom everything in Creation returns This means that everything in Creation tends to return to its origin; and this led the followers of the Qur-án to believe in the law of gravitation, which developed into the law of attraction

"Al-Jāmi'"—The Collector, The Combiner—refers to the law which keeps the various ingredients of a thing in unison; this is commonly known as the Law of Cohesion In this connection another attribute—"Al-Wadūd"—He Who loves intensely—inspired the early Muslims to believe in the Law of Affinity, and they concluded that this is a sort of love reposed in everything that impels it towards things of the same class.

In contrast to these Attributes, another—"Al-Māni'" by name—speaks of the Law of Repulsion. The word means He Who keeps things separated from each other. They

## DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

remain, as it were, at arm's length. Then come the two great laws—the law of expansion and the law of contraction. “Al-Bāsīt” is He Who opens things and discloses all that lies in them, while “Al-Qābız” is He Who contracts things. We also find the law of conservancy spoken of in other two names—“Al-Bāqī” and “Al-Hasīb”. The former means He Who preserves things, and the latter, He Who looks to the safety of things. We are assured that the material which exists in the universe for our use has been created indestructible. It may change its form, but its essence remains intact.

The Holy Qur-án lays special stress on this fact. It says that everything in Nature has preordained measures. Everything that comes from the heavens is again given measured proportions, and it is for us to respect and observe those measures when we use them. Though it is a universal law to be observed on each plane of humanity, yet it plays a most important part in physical science. Science chiefly means the knowledge of measures and proportions which, when observed, work miracles. In this connection we find another Attribute, “Al-Mūhsī”—He Who knows the measures and qualities of things. The name enjoins us to possess knowledge of the measures aforesaid, otherwise we should have to close all chemical laboratories.

“Al-Khāliq”—He Who mixes various things so as to create new things. The name is responsible for the laws of combination under which things of contrary qualities combine to produce others with new properties not existing in their ingredients.

I have enumerated here a few of the Names that inspired the early workers in science to discover those basic laws, but every attribute of God works in the universe in the form of some law. We have, therefore, to ponder over these Names again; they will disclose many other laws working in Nature, but not within our ken.

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

I conclude this aspect of the Holy Names with the mention of two other Names, just as extensive in their signification in relation to the various aspects of humanity—"Ar-Rahmān" and "Ar-Rahīm". The former refers to the beneficence of God which has already created everything we need in life—things which have come into existence even before life began. The latter refers to that Divine Beneficence which makes our labours bring forth fruit a hundredfold. The two attributes assure us that everything material that we need to make life happy has already been created, and when we use it rightly, our actions will never remain unrequited.

The whole creation is full of such material, heaped up and running over, and it only awaits our exertion to bring about the desired result. With this assurance Muslims approached Nature and unravelled it. They enriched the world and gave it blessings unknown before. It is impossible to praise Muslims too highly for their great contribution to civilization. I may say that the world before Islam was as though it were living from hand to mouth, with very scanty material. The Qur-ān came and informed mankind of the various kinds of riches, beauty and wealth that were stored up in Nature, and created for human enjoyment. In the light of this teaching, the Muslims not only widened the scope of knowledge and learning, but introduced new treasures of happiness and comfort. From food to high art the book inspires man to acquire everything that may supply his need or appetite, but without exceeding the limits. The Qur-ān clearly declared that every blessing of God was meant for those who will use it in the service of God, which in the Holy Qur-ān stands for the service of humanity. The world was without delicacies of food before Islam, but we find dainty things on Muslim tables in great variety: delicious foods, healthy drinks, tasty pickles and preserves and various kinds of fruits. Man used to clothe himself in coarse cotton materials and rough woollen fabric

## DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

to protect himself from the inclemency of the weather. The skins of animals were used for clothing in colder climates, but Islam brought every kind of material, cotton, wool, silk, and goat-hide into use, and in the most beautiful designs. In India, clothing was of khadi—coarse cotton cloth, and a rough sort of silk was worn by the gentry, but when the country came under Muslim rule it made wonderful improvements in this respect. The weavers in the reign of only one Moghul Emperor, Akbar the Great, worked up silk and cotton into thirty designs. I can hardly find anything existing at present in the list of materials worn by well-to-do men in India that does not owe its origin to the Moghul rule. I find similar improvements in architecture and the means of conveyance, with all the advances in traffic, gardening, irrigation and navigation, crockery and household furniture. On the other hand, Muslims did not neglect to fortify their towns against attack, or to cultivate a martial spirit. In fact, it would need a most voluminous literature to detail all that was founded by Muslims to advance our civilization and happiness; and it is a religious book like the Qur-án that inspires its readers with these things, in their choicest form. Muslims acted on two principles—first to use every blessing of God in its best form, and in a way that might embrace beauty, pleasure and comfort, secondly, to use these things in such a manner as not to disturb the happiness of others or lead to indulgence and extravagance. The Qur-án prophesied that man would rise continually by following its precepts, and declared, by way of metaphor, that Islam would create a new heaven and a new earth. No one can deny the fulfilment of the prediction. Western culture has inherited the first part of Muslim civilization and is improving it wonderfully, but they are lacking on the moral side. And when I say that all this was inspired by the Qur-án it shows that religion from God does not come to supply the human race with a sickly

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

theology and deter us from the enjoyment of life. Rather does it come to enhance our enjoyment, but in a way that may not engender bestial passion in us, at the expense of others.

I have strayed somewhat from my subject, but it was necessary, in a way, to do so when enumerating the various bounties that God has showered on us.

To resume. So far I have dealt with Attributes that assist us individually, but we are sociable by nature, and no society can exist without the possession of certain morals. I do not here propose to write a treatise on sociology based upon the Qur-ānic teaching, so I will only refer to those Holy Names by the imitation of which we can build up a strong social fabric. These attributes can be divided into two classes, first, those that induce us to do good to others, and secondly those that refer to the attitude we should adopt when we find others in error.

Under the first heading I give the following "Rabbu 'l-'Alamīn". This has various meanings, but one will suffice us here—Nourishing of all. It excludes all considerations of race, colour, country or creed, we should look on all alike, and our gift should go to every creature of God. Whatever has been given us by God should go to the help of others. I have already said something about "Ar-Rahmān" and "Ar-Rahīm". They, too, have various shades of meaning. Both words are from the same root, *Rhm*, that means mercy, but they refer to different forms of mercy. They convey the idea of beneficence, goodness and charity, but not one of these words signifies what is conveyed in the two words. "Rahmān" speaks of the beneficence that we should show in looking to others' needs, even though they deserve no such kindness. It should not come in the form of compensation, but of our own accord; and sometimes even at a time when the needs of others have not yet made themselves felt. It is like the

## DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

kindness of a mother who makes various preparations for the comfort of a baby still in the womb

“Rahīm” signifies that beneficence which we show in rewarding the actions of others, but our reward should be many times greater than that which the actions of others deserve

“Al-Karīm”—Generous and Bounteous “Al-Wahhāb”—He Who showers His blessings on others regardless of their merits “Al-Razzāq”—Nourisher “Al-Mu’tī”—Giver of Gifts “An-Nāfi’”—He Who brings profit to all and does not stand in need of others “Al-Ghanī” and “Al-Mughnī”—He Who is rich and does not stand in need of others, but makes others rich and free from want Elsewhere the Qur-ān declares that Our Lord is neither poor nor needy. Then comes another Name of God that is very significant in this respect. It is “As-Samad.” It means He Who looks to the need of others and on whom all depend for their needs. To equip ourselves with Divine Attributes is equivalent in Islam to the worship of God, and that is the conception of worshipping God expressed in the Qur-ān, and it is therefore our religious duty to become rich and amass wealth, not, of course, by the exploitation of others or by robbing them of their wealth.

Islam, therefore, is not a religion that favours poverty. It preaches charity without doubt, but not to an extent that may reduce us to poverty Though not a sin, still it is not desirable in Islam to be without wealth

“Al-Wadūd”—He Who is Love and loves others intensely. “Al-Wālī”—The Guardian of others “Al-Mujīb”—He Who listens to the prayers of others and responds to one who beseeches “Al-Hādī”—He Who guides others in the right path. “Ar-Ra’ūf”—He Who out of kindness wards off impending troubles and evils overtaking others. “Al-Mu’min”—The Maintainer of Peace “Al-Muḥaimin”—He Who guards others in the time of danger. “Al-Hafīz”—The Protector.

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

All these Attributes are too clear to demand any further explanation. I wish one in ten thousand of us could equip himself with them or some of them, and then the world would find itself a heaven. Poverty and misery would be no more, nor would there be any complaint of non-employment or destitution. If those in power could act as does the Nourisher of All in the universe, such action would extinguish all racial bias and colour prejudice. It would redeem foreign rule from all that is undesirable in the eyes of the subject races, in fact, there would remain no question of foreign and native, those two words most hateful and fatal to all hope of universal peace.

Now I come to such Names as will assist us when we have to deal with those who are in the wrong and commit offences. "Al-'Ādil" —All justice and equity—is one of the Names of God, but is explained by another Attribute "Mālikī Yaumī 'd-Dīn"—Master of the Day of Requital. "Mālik" also means Owner. It refers to another beautiful quality exhibited by God in dealing with our offences. He is the Owner, and we are among His chattels. He chastises us for our errors in a way that may not damage His property in us. He often forgives us, but if He finds that His forgiveness increases inordinacy in us and makes us stubborn, He punishes us for our good. A judge is bound to meet the demands of the law in every case, but the ways of God are different from those of the average judge. If the offence of a person affects others, He punishes that person unless he is forgiven by the offended one. But if a person commits a wrong that affects his own self, God gives punishment or forgiveness as the case may be with the object of reform. There is no vengeance in the ways of the Lord. Punishment with Him is a disciplinary measure and not a satisfaction of anger or revenge. We find sometimes, in the case of people guilty of political offences, that the punishment awarded them is so excessive as practically to wipe out the offender and his family. Unfortunately, political prestige

## DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

among the ruling class has now entered into the realm of justice though it is the last thing that should affect the mind of a judge.

In short, "Mālikī Yaumī 'd-Dīn"—Master of the Day of Requital—is the only Attribute in the Holy Qur-ān that speaks of God's punishment but, on the contrary, we find several other Attributes that speak of mercy and grace in connection with sinners, for example "Al-Ghafūr"—The Great Forgiver, "Al-'Afuww"—The Pardoner, "Al-Tawwāb"—The Acceptor of Repentance, Who returns to His Mercy when He finds an inordinate person repentant I say again, if we could follow the ways of the Lord in our dealings with those who do wrong to us, we should find more correction and repentance among wicked people than would come from any penal measures.

There are various other Divine Attributes mentioned in the Qur-ān, some of them such as will, if we possess them, increase our personality Others should be ours to enable us to keep order and discipline among those under us

These Attributes are vast in their meaning and possess diverse aspects applicable to every department of business life In these pages I can only give the meanings which appear to me necessary for the building up of character. I enumerate now the rest of the Attributes, and begin with the qualities essential for the beautifying of our personality.

"Al-Halīm"—He Who shows forbearance or clemency when wronged by others, He Who conceals offences, moderate, gentle, leisurely in His dealings, not of hasty temper, grave and calm.

"As-Shakūr"—He Who approves or rewards others largely for small deeds. He in Whose estimation the work of others has prospered but meagrely He multiplies His reward to them. Generally the word means thankful, or one who does his utmost in showing his gratitude with his heart and tongue.

"Al-Hamīd"—He Who is praised in every way, He Who is commended and mentioned with approbation.



## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

“ Al-Haqq ”—He Who is Right, Correct He Whose work is suitable to the requirements of justice, wisdom and righteousness The word includes the ideas of fitness, propriety, competency or adaptability

“ Al-Hasīb ”—He Who is sufficient as a reckoner, or as a giver of what suffices The word refers to the prompt rendering of the account, as well as to the asking of others to give account.

“ As-Sabūr ”—He Whose patience is greater than others, He Who is calm in suffering the pangs of affliction He Who withholds Himself from impatience and His tongue from complaint. He Who faces hard trials with endurance; it may mean the long-sufferer, and Who does not hastily take revenge upon the disobedient

“ Al-Muqsit ”—He Who acts equably or justly.

“ Al-Majīd ”—One Who possesses glory, honour and dignity. Who is righteous in His actions as well as munificent and liberal and good in disposition

“ Al-Wasiyy ”—He Who is relied upon in the management of affairs, He in Whom one may confide in the disposal of things or rely on for the management of affairs.

“ Al-Shahīd ”—He Who is present and bears witness to things rightly.

“ Al-Aḥad ”—The One, The Unique in His Ways.

“ Al-Mutā’lī ”—Superior to others in excellent qualities.

“ Zu ’l-Jalāl wa ’l-Ikrām ”—He Who possesses greatness, majesty and bounty

“ Al-Barr ”—The Compassionate, The Very Benign to His Servants; The Boundless in goodness and beneficence.

“ Al-Bāqī ”—He Who survives others and keeps things intact or in the state in which they are.

“ Al-Rāfi’ ”—He Who raises another’s status and condition.

“ Al-Mu’izz ”—He Who increases another’s honour, and

“ Al-Muzill ” is He Who lowers others in rank.

## DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

" Al-Hayy "—He Who is everliving and makes others so.

" Al-Mumit "—He Who puts another to death, He Who annihilates

" Al-Muqaddim "—He Who gives others a preference or puts them at the head of affairs

" Al-Mu'akhkhir "—He Who reduces others to the lowest standard.

" Al-Awwal "—The First, and " Al-Ākhir "—The Last.

" Al-Matīn "—The Strong, The Stout, The Firm, The Hard.

" Al-Wājid "—He Who knows the whereabouts of all things

" Al-Muntaqim "—He Who for the establishing for good avenges Himself upon wrongdoers

" Al-Wahyy "—The Owner, The Protector.

" An-Nūr "—The Light

" Ar-Rashīd "—He Who puts others on the " Right Path."

Let us ponder over these Names and stretch our imagination to what extent we will, we shall fail to improve on the list. Every excellent quality that a civilized man should possess will be found in it. It must not be forgotten that these attributes are used in a good sense when spoken of God. For this reason the Qur-án calls them the Excellent Names of God. For example, " Matīn " means hard or strong, but in the case of God, the hardness referred to is to serve some good purpose, and the same is true of every attribute. Therefore we have to clothe ourselves with these attributes for the purpose of doing good, and not to cause harm to others. In fact, the Holy Book was sent to us to show us the ways of the Lord, in which He acts in the universe; so that we may create in ourselves such qualities as may meet the requirements of the examples set us and lead us to success. The rest of the Book either explains them or shows us the method by which we may equip ourselves with them. It also mentions the evils that nullify or neutralize them. Had there been no

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

code of civilization in the world, these hundred Names would have been sufficient to act as beacon-lights in the troubled waters of life. Let us follow them and adorn our characters with them, and I see no reason why a person with a single grain of wisdom in his head should take exception to such a course. We have to live on the earth where everything follows a certain course prescribed for it. Our happiness lies mainly in our adaptability thereto; and so the Qur-án has conferred on us the greatest boon we can imagine by lighting us on the surer way.

## CHAPTER VIII

# THE DEFINITION AND DIVISION OF THE MUSLIM FAITH

### QUALITIES OF A REALLY CIVILIZED GENTLEMAN

WHEN the Qur-án laid the foundation of human advancement on ourselves, creating within us the requirements of the various Names of God, as mentioned in the Book, the Holy Prophet of Islam came to explain and enlighten. He taught us the method to pursue in order to equip ourselves with Divine Attributes, and it is for us to possess all the elements of Muslim faith which have been enumerated by him when giving us the various constituents of the said faith.

In this respect Islam again has a message not known before in the world of religion. Muhammad gives to mankind a new conception of faith. Faith, as usually understood elsewhere, is something to be accepted by us as religious truth. It may or may not have any direct or indirect bearing upon our daily life. It may not even come within the scope of intelligence and reason. We have to accept it, as dogmatic theology would say, for our soul's salvation. But faith in Islam means knowledge of a thing with a conviction concerning it so strong as to compel us to follow its dictates in our daily life. The Holy Prophet has made this perfectly clear. He has made for us a royal road to reach the goal. He has mentioned some seventy elements of faith, and we were told that unless we possess all of these we cannot perfect our faith. Herein lies a marked difference distinguishing Islam from all what I may

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

call sickly theologies. It is absurd to demand from intelligent people belief in things that no one can accept in the face of reason and logic. How can one accept a thing as a truth which is incapable of producing any effect on us in this life? We cannot live on hollow promises of future salvation. We are told that we enter into this world as if we were already condemned for sins we have never committed, which sins were committed by other persons thousands of years ago, and that another man came thereafter to redeem us from the evil consequences of the original sin. We are told that we are born with a tainted nature, and, if we believe that some innocent person was punished on our behalf, our nature would become transmuted and the basest metal shine like gold. Nay, our faith will exempt us from all obligation, and relieve us from any necessity for action, which is, no doubt, an interesting tale for a nurse to tell when lulling children to sleep.

Islam, I assert, came with no such ear-pleasing promises. It demands from us good deeds. Each of us has to bear his own cross. And yet it comes with a universal gospel for humanity. It says that all men are born with a pure nature, with wonderful and splendid capacities, that there is a Divine Element in us, that we are capable of soaring higher and higher; that we can leave the confines of animalism and reach the Divine precincts. Islam does not divide the human race into two predestined classes, "saved" and "un-saved." All of us are potentially saved. Heaven is our birthright, and we lose it by our own misdeeds, sin is not a heritage, but an acquisition—we are all born with a clean slate to write upon. Of course we need guidance to actualize our potentialities for good and as a safeguard against our evil inclinations. Muhammad explains or expounds this when he divides faith into various branches. Let us consider them. A man may hold any creed or conviction. He may not be a Muslim. He may see for himself if in order to become a good citizen of the

## MUSLIM FAITH

world he must turn his back on the faith of Islam. He is a unit of humanity and an honourable member of the fraternity. He is sociable by nature. He has been assigned his own share of prosperity in order to further the good of society in general. Let him consult Muhammad before he begins his activities, and he will find in the teachings of the Holy Prophet all that is good in other teachings, and something more, but never a hint of dogma. He need not stifle his own intelligence or the voice of conscience. All he has to do is to mould his daily actions in the manner prepared by Muhammad. He need not read even the Qur-án to begin with. I would like him to take our articles of faith as a guide to a good and honourable life, and see for himself if he can get anything like it elsewhere. Let us first ponder over these duties and obligations, let us examine our life-tendencies, passions, and desires, in a word, study our consciousness. It is again, I say, a sickly theology that demands from us that we crush down our life-tendencies. They are gifts of Nature and we have to utilize them; they have, no doubt, their use and abuse, and we must approach them with care. They are the bedrock foundations of a most noble building. Therein lie both our happiness and our misery. Whether you call it a religion or a "code of civilization," it is perfectly clear that we need a course that may enable us to make a right use of the aforesaid gifts. A religion is no religion if it does not take cognizance of these things.

Herein, I say again, lies the *superiority of Islam to all other creeds*. I do not ask my readers to accept Islam, nor do I request them to make a comparative study of religions. I would only ask them to consider the divisions of faith that Muhammad has made, and think for themselves whether or not they require them for their own good. In one of my former chapters<sup>1</sup> I asked my readers to keep the Hundred

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, Chapter VII pp 82-108

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

Names of God given in the Qur-án as their guide in their everyday business affairs. Now I ask them to translate the requirements of the Islamic faith into action, and I tell them that they will reach the acme of civilization. I ask even those who say that religion as a whole has done no good to human society to refer to any code of action that may lead us to happiness and prosperity and see if the matter they suggested has not been anticipated by Muhammad. The Muslim faith, as the Prophet says, consists of some seventy elements and a few more. All his traditions enumerate the first seventy, but they differ in those which carry the number up to seventy-nine. I give sixty-seven, and omit those which Muslims observe in acts of ceremonial piety.

(1) *Hayá'*—sense of shame, pudency, modesty, a shrinking of the soul from foul conduct through fear of blame or out of self-respect.

(2) *Khauf*—fear especially of God, from love for Him.

(3) *Tauba*—Repentance. The Arabic word literally means "to return." In the Qur-ánic sense it does not mean hip-repentance. We must, first of all, feel pangs of remorse on account of the evil that we have committed, and then make up our minds never to repeat it. Finally, to complete our course of repentance we must also do an act contrary to what we did before. In this respect the Holy Qur-án says, "And whoever repents and does good, he surely turns to Allah a (goodly) turning" (xxv 71). "Except those who repent and amend and make manifest (the truth)" (ii. 160). According to the Holy Qur-án, *Tauba* consists in repentance, amendment, and doing a thing that may wipe out the inclinations towards the particular wrong of which we repent. A person, for example, who steals or deprives others of their property in any way must learn the opposite habit of generosity and give alms to others in order to complete his *Tauba*. This kind of atonement is recommended in the Qur-án, when it says,

## MUSLIM FAITH

"Surely good deeds take away evil deeds" (xi. 114). We do not exaggerate in our praise of the Book for its deep knowledge of our nature. It seems to know it through and through and finds suitable remedies for our ailment. The Church doctrine of atonement, on the other hand, increases wrong and puts sin at a premium.

(4) *Nikāh*—married life. The institution of marriage came in the first place to satisfy our sexual instinct. This, too, is a life-tendency. The abuse of the passions has caused immense harm to the world. All attempts to crush passion have proved failures. Celibacy is but the nursery of immorality, and Islam, therefore, forbids it. The Holy Book, when speaking of such an institution as exists in various religious orders in the world as an act of piety, says that it was never ordered by God Himself, but the people devised it as a matter to please God (lvii. 27).

The Holy Qur-án classes fornication as a crime next only to murder. It—the latter—deprives a family of all the benefit that was to come to it from the murdered person, the former ruins the happiness of the family when a woman's or man's affection wanders. Unfortunately, the evil is becoming more prevalent with the growth of civilization. The Qur-án not only forbids it, but prohibits us even to go near it. It asks us to avoid such occasions as are likely to tempt us to fall into it. It says, "And go not nigh to fornication, surely it is an indecency and evil is the way." Islam appeared at a time when the evil was rife everywhere. Even the wholesome institution of marriage was abused to the degree of sacrilege. Some people used to have marital relations with those who stood within the prohibited degrees. In verse 23 of chapter iv the Qur-án, therefore, makes mention of all such women as were taken in marriage before the appearance of Islam, and forbids us to marry them. Then it forbids us in verse 24 to marry women that are already married to others. But the obligation ceases



## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

in the case of war-captives. Even then a Muslim has to marry them again by paying them all their marriage dues. Concubinage, as well as the system of "keeping women," is clearly condemned, as we find in chapter iv, verse 25 "And whoever among you has not within his power ampleness of means to marry free believing women, then (he may marry) of those whom your right hands possess from among your believing maidens . . . so marry them with the permission of their masters, and give them their dowries justly, they being *chaste, not fornicating, nor receiving paramours*" "And marry those among you that *are widows and those who are fit among your male slaves and your female slaves*" (xxiv 32) "And let those who do not find a match keep chaste until Allah makes them free from want out of His Grace" (xxiv. 33)

Marriage becomes an obligatory institution in Islam. It excludes only those who do not find a match, or lack the means to marry. The Qur-án advises every one of us to remain in the married state, because not only does it find means for us to satisfy our passion in a befitting manner but also because domestic life is the very nursery of good morals. It cultivates in us love, compassion, and the spirit of self-sacrifice (xxx. 21). The Qur-án, therefore, makes parenthood a duty. But modern civilization shirks the burden of this duty. People in the West try either to limit the number of their children or totally to dispense with offspring. The Arabs in pre-Islamic days resorted to infanticide. The Qurán said "And do not kill your children for fear of poverty, We give them sustenance and yourselves (too), surely to kill them is a great wrong" (xvii 31). But the civilized Christian countries, as Muhammad 'Alí says, "stand more in need of this admonition than the Arabs did in the times of ignorance." The West will very soon find out its error. The decreasing birth-rate is already alarming, and the system of temporary

## MUSLIM FAITH

marriages, as recently adopted in Russia, has proved a curse and a palpable danger to any healthy society. No State can bring up children in the same way as if they were looked after under the roof of their own parents. Nurses must obviously lack the affection that is kindled in a mother's breast. The positivist would, however, think otherwise. The system was tried in some places in the West, and gave rise to an unmanageable class which, having no respect for social limits, is prone to transgress all healthy bounds.

(5) *Physical cleanliness* The Qur-án says as follows. "And Allah loves those who purify themselves" (ii 222). "And do purify your garments and shun uncleanness" (lxxiv 4 and 5).

(6) *Abstinence from absurd things* "Successful indeed are the believers . . . who keep aloof from what is vain" (xxiii. 1 and 3). "And leave those who have taken their religion for a play and idle sport" (v 70). When speaking of godly people, the Holy Book says "And when they pass by what is absurd, they pass by nobly" (xxv 72).

(7) *Abstinence from idle and undesirable talk.* This seems rather an ordinary observation, but many troubles do actually arise from unnecessary talk. The Holy Prophet advises us to avoid many things, some of which I give here. First, we have been prohibited from vulgar and useless talk, we must remain silent until there is some real occasion for talking. We should also abstain from unnecessary controversy, and not put on airs when talking. We should refrain even from excessive refinement in our talk. We should shun quarrelling, indecent words, abuse, swearing, cursing and jesting, and should not overstep the mark when making even harmless jokes. We should not make false promises, indulge in back-biting or slander. We should shun all kinds of falsehood. The Qur-án says "And yield not to any mean swearer, defamer going about with slander" (lxviii. 10 and 11). We

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

have repeatedly, in the Qur-án, been warned against telling lies. The curse of God is on the liar. The Prophet says: "Keep away from lies as they lead to ill-deeds." "We utter one word of lie and we are compelled then to do many wrongs to conceal our lie." "Back-biting is worse than fornication" "They are the worst among the people of God who go about with slander"

(8) *Indecency*. It is the duty of every Muslim, as the Qur-án says, to banish indecency from human society. He, as in duty bound, should admonish people against it.<sup>1</sup>

(9) *Abstinence from pride*. "Surely Allah does not love him who is proud and boastful" (iv. 36) "(As for) that future abode, We assign it to those who have no desire to exalt themselves in the earth nor make mischief" (xxviii 83) The Prophet says "He will not enter into heaven who has got a tittle of pride in his heart"

(10) *Abstinence from vanity*, or making a show of our possessions to others "And be not like those who come forth from their houses in great exultation and to be seen of men" (viii 47) "So woe unto the praying ones, who are unmindful of their prayers Who do (good) to be seen" (cvii 4, 5, 6) "And Allah does not love him who is proud, boastful—and those who spend their property in alms to be seen of the people" (iv 38)

(11) *Abstinence from hypocrisy* "Surely the hypocrites are in the lowest stage of the fire, and you shall not find a helper for them" (iv 145)

(12) *Abstinence from avarice*. "And whoever is preserved from the niggardliness of his soul, these it is that are the successful ones" (lix 9). The Prophet says "The son of

<sup>1</sup> "Surely Allah enjoins the doing of justice and the doing of good (to others) and the giving to the kindred, and He forbids indecency and evil and rebellion, He admonishes you that you may be mindful" (lx1 90)

## MUSLIM FAITH

Adam becomes older and older while two of his passions grow younger and younger, passion for wealth, avarice and desire for long life "

(13) *Abstinence from mischief, and ill-will to others.* " And do not act corruptly in the land, making mischief " (ii. 6). " And do not make mischief in the land surely Allah does not love the mischief-maker "

(14) *Abstinence from anger* " (And they hasten to the heavens) who restrain anger and pardon men and Allah loves the doers of good " (iii. 133)

(15) *Abstinence from malice* " Our Lord . . and do not allow any spite to remain in our hearts " (lix. 10).

(16) *Abstinence from dishonesty* " And he who acts unfaithfully shall bring that in respect of which he has acted unfaithfully on the day of Resurrection "

(17) *Abstinence from envy or jealousy* " I seek refuge in the Lord of the dawn from the evil of the envious when he envies " (cxiii).

(18) *Abstinence from conceit* " Have you not considered those who attribute purity to themselves? Nay, Allah purifies those whom he pleases " (iv. 49) " And Allah does not love him who is vainglorious, boastful "

(19) *Abstinence from extravagance and niggardliness* " And do not squander wastefully " " Surely the squanderers are the fellows of the devils, and the devil is ever ungrateful to his Lord." " And do not make your hand to be shackled to your neck nor stretch it forth to the utmost (limit) of its stretching forth, lest you should (afterwards) sit down stripped off, blamed " (xvii. 26, 27, 29). " Eat and drink and be not extravagant, surely He does not love the extravagant " (vii. 31)

(20) *Abstinence from exposing certain parts of the body.* The Holy Prophet would not allow a Muslim to bathe naked in a public bath, but modern civilization even goes to the other

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

**extreme.** It allows women to expose parts of the body that were covered in the Victorian age.

(21) *Learning.* I would refer my readers to what I have written in the foregoing pages, where I deal with one of the Names of God, i.e. "‘Alīm" The Holy Book throws light on the subject. In a most laconic way it enumerates the various ways of acquiring knowledge. The Holy Prophet declares the attainment of knowledge to be a Muslim's duty. The very first revelation that the Holy Prophet received from Above makes knowledge the means to exalt and magnify man. The Qur-án says: "Only those fear God who are possessed of knowledge" (xxxv. 28).

(22) *Hopefulness.* The Qur-án says "And despair not of Allah's mercy. surely none despairs of Allah's mercy except the unbelieving people" (xii 87)

(23) *Tawakkul*—Trust in God

(24) *Razā bi 'l-Qazā*—Resignation to Him. The Qur-án says: "And rely on the Ever-Living One Who dies not, and celebrate His praises, and Sufficient is He as being aware of the faults of His servants" (xxv 58) " (They are good) who trust in Allah, then surely Allah is Mighty, Wise" (viii 49). Trust in God and resignation to God are, in my opinion, two of the essentials in our morals which can save us from anxiety in our daily affairs and make us happy and contented. We have to observe the former when we begin any work, and we have to act on the latter principle when that work ends. Trust in God, in the Qur-ánic sense, does not mean reliance on Him for our needs when we lead a lazy life and do nothing for ourselves—such a kind of reliance is only a pious blind to cover our idleness. Islam declares idleness a sin. " Tie thy camel and trust in God " was the reply of the Holy Prophet to a companion who came to him, and when asked about his camel, he told the Prophet that he had left the animal in the valley unbridled, and he trusted in God to look after it. But

## MUSLIM FAITH

the Prophet asked him to go back and tie it and then trust in God, because it was God even then Who would save the animal from divers mishaps of which the owner had never dreamed. This saying of the Prophet is a most lucid commentary on the principle of "Trust in God" We should do our utmost and make every effort to succeed in the matter in hand, and then look to God for the rest, because there is many "a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip" that is beyond our knowledge and control. This will not only relieve us from useless anxieties but also will carry us nearer to success; but if we fail in our endeavours we must rely on God; this alone can save us from heart-burnings and remorse This may seem scant consolation, but could anyone think of better? There is no royal road to success There are rises and falls in it, and I fail to find a better course to make men happy and contented in view of the ups and downs of life than the Islamic principle of trust and resignation The former energizes all our dormant faculties and the latter saves us from despair.

(25) *Ikhlas*—sincerity. The Qur-án says "We shall have our deeds and you shall have your deeds and we are sincere to Him" (ii 139)

(26) *Hijrat*—Flight (from places of misery and insurmountable troubles) The Qur-án says "For those who do good in this world, is good, and Allah's earth is spacious, only the patient will be paid back their reward in full without measure" (xxxix. 10). In Muslim literature, flight usually refers to the well-known Flight of the Prophet from Mecca to Medina, when the oppression and tyranny of the enemy in Mecca became unbearable. The Prophet faced every trouble patiently, but when his enemies determined to kill him, he had no other choice but to flee from the scene, and had a narrow escape from imminent danger This event in itself is a useful guide to one in trouble. The Prophet says that

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

"the real *Muhājir* (one who flees) is he who flees from forbidden things." The prophetic eye of Jesus foresaw days of trouble that must inevitably overtake his people, and he preached his Sermon on the Mount as a warning against the coming evil. He preached a sort of passive resistance, which may not be without some use under certain unavoidable circumstances, but is fatal to manliness and emasculates courage. "Flight" as ordered by the Prophet is a better alternative. It is not only in the matter of religion, when the opposition against it becomes unbearable, but under all circumstances we have been ordered to shun the place of trouble and seek relief elsewhere if we cannot ward off the evil. "If," as the Law of Moses puts it, "they persecute you in one city, flee ye into another" We have to make recourse to this principle especially in the matter of earning our livelihood. If one place does not offer favourable chances we may go to some other place, no particular place is a home for a Muslim, every land is his if he exerts himself and makes the very best use of the opportunities that may come to him. In this respect I give the following quotation from the Qur-ān, which applies to religion as well as to other worldly matters "Surely as for those whom the Angels cause to die while they are unjust to their souls, they shall say In what state were you? They shall say We were weak in the earth They shall say: Was not Allah's earth spacious so that you should have migrated therein? . . . Except the weak from among the men and the women and the children who have not in their power the means nor can they find a way (to escape) So those, it may be, Allah will pardon them, and Allah is Pardoning, Forgiving. And *whoever flies in Allah's way, he will find in the earth many places of refuge and abundant resources*" (iv 97-100).

Italics are mine Flying in Allah's way consists not only in our efforts in religious matters. It is just the same thing when we fight for our livelihood, and the verse assures us of

## MUSLIM FAITH

" abundant resources " in our place of refuge when we leave our mother-land in search of better ways Any place, as I said before, is our home The whole earth is ours and we should not attach ourselves to this or that land. The betterment of life everywhere should be our goal and constant aim

(27) *Patience and perseverance.* The Qur-án says: " And seek assistance through patience and prayer, and most surely it is a hard thing except for the humble ones " (ii. 45) " Be patient, surely Allah is with the patient " (viii 46). " (Their Apostle said to them) . . . And certainly we would bear with patience your persecution of us " (xiv. 12). " Only the patient will be paid back their reward in full without measure " (xxxix 10).

Patience is one of the chief elements in our character that bring us success No one can achieve any greatness in any walk of life without perseverance or patience. In order to perfect our morals we are often visited with hardships and trials. We are not tried by God, but simply to bring our patience to perfection Muhammad, the Prophet of Arabia, is admittedly the most successful man in the whole human race, but trials came in his life which were sufficient almost to exhaust even his patience.

### MORALS TO BE OBSERVED IN FAMILY CIRCLES, ETC.

(28) *To serve parents* The Qur-án says " And your Lord has commanded that you shall not serve (any) but Him and goodness to your parents. If either or both of them reach old age with you, say not to them ' Ugh ' nor chide them, and speak to them a generous word." " And make yourself submissively gentle to them with compassion, and say: O my Lord! have compassion on them, as they brought me up (when I was) little " (xvii 23-24). " And we enjoined on man goodness



## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

to his parents, and if they contend with you that you should associate (others) with Me, of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them " (xxix. 8) " And We have enjoined man in respect of his parents . . . Be grateful to Me and to both your parents, to Me is the eventual coming. . . . And keep company with them in this world kindly " (xxxi. 14-15).

The Qur-án places obedience to parents next only to submission to Allah. It creates in us a strong sense of our obligations to constituted authorities, but modern civilization is lacking in this respect. Children in affluence and parents in penury are common objects in the West. Unfortunately, the lesson to be learned from the conduct of Jesus to his mother is something undesirable. Even the whole of Biblical literature does not lay any great stress on this moral, though it is one of the Ten Commandments. The Qur-án, on the other hand, speaks strongly and repeatedly of our serving our parents especially in their old age. But it clearly warns us against our following their example if they go against the Ways of the Lord.

### THE BRINGING UP OF CHILDREN

The Qur-án says. " And do not kill your children for fear of poverty " (xvii. 31) " [The servants of the Beneficent God are they] . . . Who say: O our Lord! grant us in our wives and our offspring the joy of our eyes " (xxv. 74).

(29) *Charity to relatives, friends, and other people in general*  
The Qur-án says. "And treat them [your female folk] with kindness " (iv. 19). " And give to the near of kin his due and (to) the needy and the wayfarer " (xvii. 26). Then comes a most beautiful verse in the Holy Qur-án that carries our charity even to those who are strangers to us. Charity, in Islam, is not confined to our own people, but we are ordered to be charitable to aliens as well. The verse goes thus. " And

## MUSLIM FAITH

serve Allah and do not associate anything with Him, and be good to the parents and to the near of kin and the orphans and the needy, and the neighbour of your kin and the alien neighbour, and the companion on a journey and the wayfarer and those whom your right hands possess, surely Allah does not love him who is proud, boastful" (iv. 36).

(30) *Charity, beneficence, mercy, and compassion.* The Qur-án lays special stress on this subject. Islam has been identified by the Holy Prophet with compassion and charity towards others. The first four Names of God, as given in the commencement of the Holy Qur-án, speak of God's mercy and compassion which are open to everyone. His beneficence has two aspects, spoken of in the Qur-án and borne out by His Work in Nature. *Rahmānīyyat* and *Rahīmīyyat* are the two Arabic words that convey the two distinct characters of mercy, which we have to observe in our kindness to others. First, we have to show our charity and beneficence to those who have no claims on them, and secondly, to those who serve us, but we should reward their actions manifold. Even in our dealings with offenders our punishment of them should be rather for correction than for vengeance.<sup>1</sup> In one place the Book places charity above all other good qualities.

Here I quote one of the verses of the Holy Qur-án that has "elicited words of praise even from the most hostile critics of the Qur-án." It sets forth faith in God and benevolence towards man as the essence of religion. "It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the East and the West, but righteousness is this that one should believe in Allah and the last day and the angels and the book and the prophets,

<sup>1</sup> "You will find others who desire that they should be safe from you and secure from their own people, as often as they are sent back to the mischief they get thrown into it headlong, therefore if they do not withdraw from you, and (do not) offer you peace and restrain their hands, then seize them and kill them wherever you find them, and against these We have given you a clear authority" (iv. 91).

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

and give away wealth out of love for Him to the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and the beggars and (for the emancipation of) captives, and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate; and the performers of their promise when they make a promise, and the patient in distress and affliction and in time of conflict—these are they who are true (to themselves), and these are they who guard (against evil)” (ii 177)

The Holy Prophet says: “God does not show His Mercy to those who do not take mercy upon others” Again he says “They invite the mercy of the Most Merciful God who are merciful themselves to others. Mercy comes from heaven to those who show mercy on earth” The Prophet also says “He is the true believer who loves his brother as himself”

(31) *Meekness, humility, and courtesy* The second Caliph, ‘Omar, reports the following saying of the Holy Prophet: God will honour him who is meek and humble to others God exalts him in the eyes of others who is small in his own eyes And He disgraces him who is proud and lowers him in others’ estimation who is great in his own eyes Again the Prophet says. “He is not of us who treats not our elders respectfully and the younger kindly” “Do not do unto others that which you do not wish others to do towards you” “God loves lenity and gives much to those who show lenity and mercy to others.” “The best among you is he who is best to others in his dealings”

(32) *Almsgiving and benevolence to others* The Qur-án says: “By no means shall you attain to righteousness until you spend benevolently, out of what you have; and whatever you spend Allah surely knows it” (iii 91). Almsgiving is one of the pillars of the Muslim faith. The Holy Book in its very beginning speaks of almsgiving as one of the chief characteristics of those who fear God Prayer and charity are the two chief themes of the Qur-án. Like its other institutions,

## MUSLIM FAITH

the Qur-án has also systematized charity as an institution. No one can be a Muslim unless and until he pays a part of his earnings for the support of poorer members of the community.

(33) *Teaching and imparting knowledge to others* The Qur-án makes teaching wisdom one of the duties of God's messenger,—“ Our Lord! and raise up in them an Apostle from among them who shall recite to them Thy communications, and teach them the Book and the wisdom, and purify them, surely Thou art the Mighty, the Wise ” (ii. 129),—as well as of those who are godly people “ It is not meet for a mortal that Allah should give him the Book and the judgment and prophethood, then he should say to men: be my servants rather than Allah's, but rather (he would say)· Be worshippers of the Lord because of your teaching the Book and your reading (it) ” (iii. 78).

(34) *Fair dealing in business.* The Qur-án says: “ Woe to the defaulters, who, when they take the measure from men, take it fully, but when they measure it out to others or weigh out for them, they are deficient ” (lxxxiii 1, 2, 3) “ Give a full measure and be not of those who diminish And weigh out with a right balance· And do not wrong men of their dues, and do not act corruptly in the earth, making mischief ” (xxvi 181-183)

(35) *Bearing true witness* “ O you who believe! be maintainers of justice, bearers of witness for Allah's sake, though it may be against your own selves or (your) parents or near relatives; if he be rich or poor, Allah is most competent (to deal) with them both, therefore do not follow (your) low desires, lest you deviate; and if you swerve or turn aside, then surely Allah is aware of what you do ” (iv. 135). “ [And the servants of the Beneficent God are] they who do not bear witness to what is false ” (xxv 72) “ O you who believe! be upright for Allah, bearers of witness with justice, and let not hatred of a people incite you not to act equitably ” (v. 8). “ And

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

do not mix up the truth with the falsehood, nor hide the truth while you know (it) " (ii. 42)

(36) *Justice and equity.* " Act equitably, that is nearer to piety " (v. 8) " When you judge between people you judge with justice " (iv. 58).

(37) *Trustworthiness* " Surely Allah commands you to make over trusts to those worthy of them " (iv 58).

(38) *Acts of reform* " So be careful of (your duty to) Allah and set aright matters of your difference " (viii 1) " The believers are but brethren, therefore make peace between your brethren " (xlix 10)

(39) *Helping in good action* " Help one another in goodness and piety, and do not help one another in sin and aggression " (v 2)

(40) *Giving good advice* " You are the best of people raised up for men, you enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong " (iii 109). " And from among you there should be a party who invite to good and enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong " (iii 103)

(41) *Forbidding wrong* (See the Qur-ánic injunction in section 40)

(42) *Fulfilment of promises* The Qur-án says. " Fulfil the promise; surely (every) promise will be questioned about " (xvii. 34). " Yea, whoever fulfils his promise and guards (against evil) then surely Allah loves those who guard (against evil) " (iii 75)

(43) *Payment of debts* The Qur-án makes payment of debts of the deceased a first lien on the property left by the deceased (iv. 12).

The Holy Prophet says that the best among men is he who pays his debts willingly, and the worst is he who is harsh in payment of his debts

(44) *Regard of limits* The Qur-án says: " If you shun the great things which you are forbidden, We will do away with

## MUSLIM FAITH

your evil inclinations and cause you to enter an honourable place of entering" (iv 31). "These are the limits of Allah, so do not exceed them, and whoever exceeds the limits of Allah, these it is that are the unjust" (ii 229) "O you who believe, do not violate the signs appointed by Allah" (v 2). "And whoever respects the signs of Allah, this surely is (the outcome) of the piety of hearts" (xxii 32)

(45) *Abstinence from injuring others* The Qur-án says: " [He is the most violent of adversaries who] . . . runs along in the land that he may cause mischief in it and destroy the tilth and the stock, and Allah does not love mischief-making " (ii 205) "God forbids indecency and evil and rebellion " (xvi 90)

(46) *Speaking good and kind words* "And you shall speak to men good words" (ii 83)

(47) *Return of greeting.* "And when you are greeted with a greeting, greet with a better greeting than it or return it; surely Allah takes account of all things" (iv 86)

(48) *To be just and equitable in our profession* The Qur-án says "And give full measure and weigh with justice" (vi 153) See also the quotations given under fair dealing, in section 34.

(49) *The giving of loans to those in poverty.* The Qur-án says. "And if the debtor is in straitness, then let there be postponement until (he is in) ease; and that you remit it as alms is better for you" (ii 280)

(50) *Charity to neighbours* The Qur-án says "And serve Allah and do not associate anything with Him, and be good to the parents and to the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the neighbour of your kin and the alien neighbour" (iv. 36).

(51) *Co-operation.* "And hold fast by the covenant of Allah altogether and be not disunited" (iii 102). "And be not like those who became divided and disagreed after clear

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

arguments had come to them " (iii 104). " Help one another in goodness and piety " (v. 2).

(52) *Obedience to the master* " We have exalted some of them above others in degrees that some of them may take others in subjection " (xliii. 32).

(53) *Obedience to the rule* " Obey Allah and the Apostle and those in authority from among you " (iv 59)

(54) *The removal of things that injure from the way of the people.*

(55) *General gratefulness* The Qur-án says " And certainly We gave wisdom to Luqmán, saying, Be grateful to Allah. And whoever is grateful, he is only grateful for his own soul, and whoever is ungrateful, then surely Allah is Self-sufficient, Praised " (xxxii. 12) " And why should Allah chastise you if you are grateful and believe? " (iv. 147) " And when your Lord made it known. If you are grateful, I would certainly give to you more, and if you are ungrateful, My chastisement is truly severe " (xiv 7).

It should not be forgotten that the giving of thanks by lip-service is of no avail in Islam The very word *Shukr*, the Arabic equivalent of "thanking," means the proper use of gifts given to us. The Qur-án repeatedly refers to gratefulness as the chief quality of men.

(56) *Love of God* (ii 160).

(57) *Love of the Prophet* (xxxiii 6).

(58) *The reading of the Qur-án* The reason for putting the above three items as constituents of Muslim faith is, I think, self-evident. If we have to follow the Qur-án as a Book of guidance in our daily life we must read it. Similarly, if we have to keep God before us as our prototype, and equip ourselves with His Attributes, our love for Him can but induce us to do the same The Prophet is an example He transmuted all God's injunctions into action We must, therefore, follow his footsteps, and if we love him we are sure to do so.

## MUSLIM FAITH

The Holy Prophet adds to the fifty-eight elements which I have given above all that we read in the definition of the Muslim faith given by him. These are the seven articles of our faith, and we have to believe in each and all of them.

We may or may not believe in any religious system, but must do and believe in these verities. They are part and parcel of our health and happiness, and they ought to be the articles of faith of any religion which claims to have come from God. They are as follows:

- (1) Law.
- (2) God, as the source of Law.
- (3) Angels—the functionaries of Law.
- (4) The Books—the record of Law
- (5) The Prophets—the intermediate persons who receive the first message from the Lord
- (6) The Hereafter.
- (7) The Day of Judgment.

These are the seven verities spoken of in the Qur-*anic* verses which demand our belief, a belief which is given to them by every person in his mundane affairs

The present is the mother of the future. The after-life is the child of the present life. The former evolves out of the latter. Matter, in its evolutionary course on the physical plane, receives its final perfection in the human frame, but it gives rise to another order—the order of morality, ethics, and spirituality. Life, with the progressive element in it, leaves the body at death like the aroma from fruit or a flower. It is like a vapour, but it possesses vast potentialities for creating a great cloud full of healthy rain. But Law, as I said before, rules every step of progress in the course of evolution. It is in obedience to Law that success or full development attends the progressive element in its journey. We therefore need a system of Law that may help us to work out our future life



## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

on desirable lines, so that we may secure a full measure of bliss in higher regions

And the code of it must, and can, only come from the original intelligence, the source of all life and its progress; hence the necessity for a Revealed Religion to disclose the above-mentioned verities, with full details for working them out. Any other system of religion is but a nursery-tale, to feed credulity and gratify the "child" in man. But the child matures one day in intelligence and judgment and begins to see things in the light of reason and culture. It is for this reason that religions based on dogma and superstition are becoming discredited in the lands of culture and advancement.

I have omitted the remaining elements of the faith appertaining to our daily life in Islam. I have selected such things as a gentleman should possess if he wishes to contribute to the happiness of society, and is interested in the advancement of the human race. Nietzsche wanted us to assume the qualities of a superman; he could only give one or two aspects of this remarkable character. His superman would not yield to the will of another, but would compel others to follow him. This is what I read in one of the two Holy Names of God, "Al-Jabbār" and "Al-Qahhār", that is, He Who subordinates others to His Will, and makes them act according to His Volition; but the followers of Nietzsche will find some ninety-eight Names of God given to us in the Qur-án. We have to equip ourselves with these Attributes. The possession of the hundred Names will make us supermen. If we want to have a practical code to reach the goal, we have to possess the various elements of faith.

## CHAPTER IX

### UNITY OF THE HUMAN RACE

NEVER has there been an obstacle to human progress so great as the idea of the inequality of mankind—an idea glaringly opposed to all the best tendencies of general civilization and culture. It was man for whom God created His numerous blessings. To all men, again, He gave the same capacities wherewith to utilize His gifts. But a large section of the human race is still deprived of those blessings on account of this very same inequality. If religion came from God, its first duty should have been to remove this inequality and establish a feeling of perfect unity among men. But the fact remains that it was the religions themselves—all those religions that came before Islam—that helped to create this trouble of inequality and disunion. The ancient religion of Persia—that is to say, the cult of the Parsis—was responsible for the Caste system that obtains in India. It was after them (the Parsis) that the people of India were divided into four sections. It is religion that has deprived millions of human beings of their ordinary rights as men. To-day there are more than 60,000,000 "untouchables" in India. The higher classes hate the very shadow of these despised beings, on purely religious grounds. Further than this, these unfortunate people have not the right to enter any house of God, nor are they allowed to hear His Words (i.e. the Vedas). For thousands of years they have been rotting in the same miserable avocations of life which they happened to enter upon at one time, when forced thereto.

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

by the sheer necessity of earning a livelihood. We have seen in the West sons of cobblers rising to the Premiership, but the *chamar* (cobbler) in India is a *chamar*, through tens of thousands of years right up to the present day. Of course, it is open to this *chamar* to embrace the faith of Islam, and thus become a dealer in hides in the second generation, and a general merchant in the third. In social status also, he may rise higher and higher until, in course of time, he becomes a member of the aristocracy. But these possibilities are debarred from him so long as he sticks to his ancestral religion. Similarly, from the point of view of Transmigration, persons who are in an abject condition in this life are in that condition on account of the vices and sins of their previous lives. It is no wonder, then, that the "untouchables" and such low-class people (as they are called) should be looked down upon with hatred by other Hindus. If these people were vicious and sinful in their previous lives (as it is supposed), it is perhaps reasonable that we should keep aloof from them. Logically the conclusion is right. Thus this theory of Transmigration, which is one of the fundamental doctrines in Hinduism, has created a serious division in the human race, but the same crime has also been committed by Christianity, although in a different way. According to the Christian faith he alone who is baptized at the time of his birth is entitled to a life in Heaven; and all not so fortunate are doomed to a life in hell, so that even if a child born of Christian parents dies before it is baptized, it is not buried in consecrated ground, and in Russia, a few centuries back, such children were burnt instead of being buried at all. If, from the point of view of the Christians, the whole of the non-Christian world are destined for hell from their very birth and are incapable of realizing the truth, it is no wonder that they should hate the thought of them. The conduct of the present-day Christians should not be adduced as belying this fact, seeing that this changed mentality is the

## UNITY OF THE HUMAN RACE

result of modern culture and education and the broadness of mind therefrom resulting. What is essential in this connection is to get the right idea of the condition of the Christian mind some centuries back, and of the words that they utter even now in churches. If, again, we open the *Book of Common Prayer*, the edition that was current before its present revised form (which is a thing of three or four years' growth and never likely to be generally accepted), it will be clearly seen, in what is known as the Athanasian Creed, that any man who fails to have faith in Jesus is doomed to everlasting hell-fire. Moreover, the curses that come from the lips of the worshippers in the churches are in part and presumably meant for the Turks, who, some two generations back, were regarded as synonymous with Muslims. Now, what should be the attitude of a good Christian when he comes out of church after joining in these prayers and curses? What a blessing, then, has Islam proved to the human race in this respect! The Prophet of Islam made it quite clear that every human being is born free from any taint of sin, and accordingly a heavenly thing so far as his birth is concerned. The teachings of all other religions have the same trend as that which we find in Hinduism and Christianity. With each of these religions the rest of mankind counts for nothing, seeing that, according to them, no other creed is fit for receiving the Divine dispensation.

Political laws come next to religion in creating fundamental cultural inequalities in the human race. The Greeks and the Romans (in a lesser degree) were not concerned with any revealed religion, but they too treated their subject nations very badly. They kept these conquered people as bond-slaves and tortured them whenever they thought fit. Even a law-giver like Justinian divided the people of Rome into two sharply divided groups, one of which was in the position of master while the other was worse than a slave. To whichever nation we turn in the pre-Islamic days the same spectacle

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

meets our eyes. Everywhere we find a large section of humanity deprived of any and every chance of progress and happiness. But this is ancient history. Yet even to-day, the nations of the West are, more or less, perpetrating the same wrongs. The original inhabitants of Africa are treated as slaves, and the conquered people are deprived of the rights that are the privilege of the ruling class. Before the Great War there were separate penal laws in Darus Salam (Africa), one for the rulers and another for the subjects. Even to-day, people only partially realize the essence of religion. As a matter of fact, the principal work of a religion should be to provide for the comforts of humanity, and to free it from the shackles forged by tradition and custom. What greater calamity can befall the human race than those which have been discussed above? Examine the civilization and religion of any nation before the advent of Islam, and you will find that not one was able to free mankind from these types of bondage, whereas if there was any special work for religion or revelation, it was only this—the work for freedom. As I have already remarked, the Holy Prophet Muhammad is surely entitled to be called the Greatest of the Prophets, if once we take into consideration the rules that the Qur-án has framed to ensure the freedom of man proceeding out of religious faith. I cannot emphasize this fact too strongly. If Moses, Jesus, Krishna, and Ramchandra (all being prophets) failed to deliver mankind from the distress that was caused by the absence of unity and equality in the race itself, then, from this point of view, the Prophet Muhammad has a far higher right to this prophetic post than any of his predecessors.

First of all, the Qur-án in its very opening describes God as Rabbu 'l-'Ālamīn—meaning that He has created and nurtured every member of the human race in the same way. Next, as if to remove the curse of distinction that has cropped up in the West, it speaks of God as the “ Lord of the East as

## UNITY OF THE HUMAN RACE

well as the West," which means that the people of the East and the West have equally come under His care of "Rabubıyyat" Again, the Qur-án gives the name of Rahman to God, which is the same as saying that in the distribution of His blessings He makes no distinction between nation, religion, race, or family The door of His mercy is equally open to all From the social standpoint it is declared again that all men are members of one and the same family, and that they have always been given the same religion, but that people disagreed about it Again, to establish a universal brotherhood, it taught that those who accept good principles and practise them are brothers to each other It was the racial, national, and religious distinctions that created dissension among mankind To remove these the Holy Qur-án made virtue the standard of honour, which is a thing attainable alike by black and white, by high and low The Book says, for example, that Mughal, Sheikh or Pathan, Brahmin or Kshatriya, British or French are so called only to be identified, but these appellations have nothing to do with the worth and honour of a man Mankind, as a whole, has been declared by God to be both honourable and excellent<sup>1</sup> But no one is entitled to this honour by virtue of birth or nationality; rather has it to be acquired by piety, and piety consists in good actions. To eradicate the distinctions of birth, the Book speaks of the Jews, saying that if they prided themselves on having descended from Abraham they should at the same time remember that even when the Lord Abraham had prayed to God that his descendants might be blessed, God replied by saying that no doubt his descendants would be blessed, but that the evil-doers from among them would not be benefited by that blessing.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "And surely We have dignified the children of Ađam" (Qur-án, xvii 70)

<sup>2</sup> "He said Surely I will make you a leader of men (Abraham) said And of my offspring? My covenant does not include the unjust, said He" (Qur-án, ii 124)

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

Similar is the pronouncement upon the unwarrantable assertion of every religious community, not excepting some present-day Muslims, that as they belong to such-and-such a religion all others are useless, and it is only they that have any right to spiritual life. On this point, by way of illustration, the Holy Qur-án takes the cases of the Jews and the Christians<sup>1</sup> and declares that these absurd claims are mere verbiage. The reality of religion consists in a person resolving to bring all his faculties under the Will of God, and then acting upon this determination. Those who succeed in doing this are, in the words of the Holy Book, the only persons who come under the Rabubiyyat of God—that is to say, who attain a perfect condition of life.

The true religion in man is actually a distinguishing feature, but unfortunately, nowadays, the mere association with any religion is considered respectable, and, what is worse, others are looked down upon on the basis of this sense of false distinction. To eradicate such a pernicious notion the Holy Book announces that he alone is successful in the eyes of God, who, besides believing in God and the Day of Judgment, does good deeds, no matter whatever religion he belongs to.<sup>2</sup> If

<sup>1</sup> "And they say None shall enter the garden (of Paradise) except he who is a Jew or the Christians. These are their vain desires" (Qur-an, 11 111)

<sup>2</sup> "Surely those who believe, and those who are Jews, and the Christians, and the Sabians, whoever believes in Allah and the last day and does good, they shall have their reward from their Lord, and there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve" (Qur-án, 11 62)

The Holy Qur-án is thus the only Book in religious literature that has been able to deal an effective blow to all sorts of false distinctions and intolerances, and to give a charter of unity and liberty to all mankind. If, in the light of the verse just quoted, we make good actions the only criterion of honour and distinction, in a moment all those national, linguistic, colour, and territorial disturbances that have proved to be the veritable curses for humanity will disappear. So radical does this verse appear in its attitude that it has caused misgivings in some minds with regard to its real sense. These have gone so far as to hold that, according to it, even a belief in the prophethood does not seem indispensable.

## UNITY OF THE HUMAN RACE

we look into the matter a bit more closely we shall find that even the purpose of believing in God and the Day of Resurrection is to produce good actions, because these two beliefs are the sources from which good actions spring and the power that keeps a man from vice. In brief, if there is anything that can rightly form the basis of distinction it is good actions; so much so that on one occasion the Holy Book chastises the Jews and Christians by the remark that it is strange that they should look down upon others simply because they descended from Abraham and Jacob, whereas Abraham and Jacob were themselves not free from the responsibility of their actions, and had to account for what they had done. Yet again, to remove this hollow sense of distinction, it declares that God is the One God for all, all are, therefore, equal in His eyes, the whole affair rests on good deeds, why do people, then, quarrel among themselves?

Thus to teach, on the one hand, that there is only One God for all and that His mercy and blessings as Rabb are equally meant for all, and to announce, on the other, that all men are members of the same family, that there are no such divisions in humanity as exist between the West and the East; and further, to level all distinctions of nation, race, colour, and community by upholding rectitude of action as the only mark of real distinction; and lastly, to class all virtuous men as brothers to one another—are the four glorious achievements of Islam, the parallels of which are nowhere to be seen in the history of mankind. To recount the benefits of these teachings is only arguing an admitted fact. It is Islam alone that, besides inculcating these teachings, has given them a practical shape. So, as I have said, it will be just and fair to call Muhammad a Prophet on the ground of these sublime teachings without having regard to any others.



## APPENDIX I

# ISLAM, RATIONALISM, AND CHRISTIANITY. OUR FUTURE ACTIVITIES

By KHWAJA NAZİR AHMAD

A LEARNED writer has recently contributed an article to the *Sunday Post* as to the Islamic progress in the British Isles. He visited Woking some time in 1924, when he attended a marriage ceremony performed at the Mosque according to Muslim rites. He was greatly impressed with the simplicity of the ceremony and the wedding sermon delivered by the Acting-Imām, in which he spoke of the Qur-ānic object of marriage. It was not a means for satisfying carnal passions, but for creating a nursery, as it were, for moral growth, within the four walls of the family. That which still further impressed the correspondent of the *Sunday Post* was the concluding portion of the Imām's discourse. First, he addressed the bridegroom, reading to him several sayings of the Holy Prophet which defined the duties of a husband towards his family, next, he addressed the bride, and cited certain other sayings of the Prophet, dealing with the duties of a wife. These sayings could not fail in their appeal to anyone, since they contained the best and wisest family advice. Ever since, the same writer has been keenly watching the activities of the Woking Muslim Mission. According to his estimate the progress of Islam among the British people is roughly one conversion a day. He thinks that the number of the converts has already exceeded one thousand, and warns the British people against its further increase. He has asked the clergy to devote their special attention to this problem. There is

## APPENDIX I

nothing to be alarmed about, for it will rather serve the cause of Islam, than otherwise, inviting, as it must, more publicity, as in the same year when certain of the local clergy raised a hue and cry against the Mission activities. Some of the English Church papers joined with them in the campaign; matters began to look serious until the Acting-Imām invited the local Vicar to a friendly and public discussion on the respective merits of Islam and Christianity. The local papers sided with the Mosque, but the Vicar deemed it advisable to keep silent.

The letter I have referred to must open the eyes of the Muslim world. Here is a testimony to the good work of the Mission from the enemy's camp. It speaks of the splendid future before Islam, if the workers are enabled to pursue the right course.

It should not be forgotten that there is no real struggle between Islam and Christianity. The Church is a beaten foe and the formal faith of the country is on the wane. Islam and Christianity present a palpable contrast. One is purely rational in its teachings, while the other is dogma throughout. The former recommends self-exertion, while the latter depends on mediation. The Church speaks of mystery and charm, while Islam does not insult our intelligence. The Western Church is admittedly paganism under a new name. The Working Mission has traced the whole story of Christianity to the Mystery Cult so successfully that the Church religion is now generally dismissed in the West as a Mithraic dispensation.

Rationalism is on the track of Islam, but already the two persuasions join hands in many ways. They both espouse the cause of science and both look upon it as their rightful comrade. They both keep utility as their aim and have no use at all for sentimentality. Rationalism has already adopted some of the Islamic tenets contrary to the Church beliefs. Like Islam, it believes in the high capabilities of man, while the Church makes us devoid of all excellence at birth. It speaks of some

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

miraculous transformation of human nature by our participation in the Holy Communion. While Islam merely contradicts the belief underlying the Sacrament, Rationalism derides it. Some fifty years ago Rationalism did not accept the existence of God, but scientific belief has changed its faith in this respect. Though belief in God has now become a scientific truth, yet men of culture did not believe in any religion as an institution from God. It is, therefore, the cause of religion which Islam has to contend for against Rationalism. It is a great problem, and its solution depends upon our belief in a life beyond the grave. If there is life after death, we must have some guidance from Above to fit us for progress in the future. Moreover, we have to show that religion in Islam came to further the cause of humanity in every way. There seems to me not much difference between Islam and Rationalism so far as the doctrine of Materialism goes. Unlike Christianity, Islam accepts Matter as the mother of the morals and spiritualities which in common parlance pass as the human soul. Christian teachings may reject the soul as a separate entity from the body, but Islam takes it as a child of the latter. Physical nature gives birth to human consciousness which, in its refined form, becomes the human soul. In short, there is not much difference between Rationalism and Islam. If once the necessity of a Revealed Religion for human progress becomes established, Islam wins the day. The Mission at Woking should devote its activities chiefly to this problem. It depends very largely on the spread of Qur-ánic literature. Muslims claim the Book to be a treasure of all knowledge and learning; if they think that it rationally meets all human problems and satisfies all our demands, they should show it to the public in the West.

## APPENDIX II

# THE HOLY QUR-ĀN ON MORAL BUILDING. ANGER AND DESIRE

By KHWAJA NAZĪR AHMAD

ANGER and desire are the treble and bass of the whole gamut of morality. They are also the root passions, and act as life-tendencies, branching off in various directions. In their original form they are bestial in character. They must be polished, otherwise they would harm irreparably the superstructure of social order. If anger, for example, assumes the forms of murder, physical hurt, libel, slander, and the rest, desire, in its naked form, engenders theft, larceny, cheating, misappropriation, adultery, and many other evils. Their combination also creates a variety of new vices, jealousy being one of them. But the said two passions, rightly blended, produce a high morality. If *anger* assumed the form of bravery and justice, *desire* becomes sublimated into mercy, sympathy, and charity. Real morality depends upon training these passions rightly, and this ought to be the first concern of human society. The culture and civilization of a nation do not lie in its ability to use brute force, but rather in the wise display of moral force. The aim and end of legislation is to check the distorted forms of *anger* and *desire*, but numerous things that arise therefrom on the moral plane remain beyond its jurisdiction. It is, therefore, the duty of a religion from God to deal rightly with the matter. Wellnigh all Books of Revelation inculcate good morals and deprecate vices. But the Qur-ānic treatment of the subject is both systematic and scientific. Without doubt, it denounces these passions in their

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

lower aspects, but it does not teach us to crush them. Rather does it treat them as the bedrock of the moral edifice. It lays down rules and regulations whereby we may control them and bring them to their proper use.

It should not be forgotten that all achievements of which the best of civilization can boast, together with their protection, are indebted to those crude passions. They set our actions in motion. Desire, at the outset, creates craving. To satisfy our cravings or appetites, we search for the means to do so. Thus appetitive passions call forth cognitive passions. We try to acquire knowledge of things that will satisfy our appetites, and the knowledge thus gained is the instigator of our actions.

The whole industrial world owes its existence to Desire. But there must also be some passion in us that urges us to protect what we have, and this passion is Anger. If Desire prompts us to acquisition, Anger prompts us to secure the safety of that which we have acquired. Thus the two passions are not only life-tendencies but instruments of human perfection. We cannot, therefore, afford to kill them, we have to balance them and discover, if we can, their proper use.

Herein lies the superiority of the Qur-án. Not only does it condemn the worst forms of evil passions as other Scriptures do, but it lays down a code of life which makes those same passions the most valuable assets of human society.

The opening chapter of the Qur-án divides the human race into three classes:

- (a) Those who are on the right path and are the recipients of God's blessings
- (b) Those who are anger-ridden people and in peril of Divine wrath
- (c) Those who have been misled and go astray.

"Dāil" is the word used in the Qur-ánic text for "misled." It primarily means one strongly tempted by evil desires. Such

## APPENDIX II

an one loses all good judgment and prudence. He cannot but go astray.

The blessed of God, as depicted by the Qur-án, are those who clothe themselves with Divine morals. These morals are no other than the same two passions in their most excellent form. Thus Anger and Desire become the dividing principles of the whole human race. We are warned in this chapter to shun the ways of those who are overtaken with Anger and Desire, and we are urged to follow in the footsteps of those who tread the right path in pursuit of the highest of morality. In other words, those who have controlled their evil passions and have converted them into their desirable forms are the chosen people of God, while the others are under His curse. If the Holy Qur-án is devoted chiefly to training these two passions in their different forms, it could not do better, seeing that on them hinges the whole machinery of a healthy society.

Anger, in its highest form, is a real blessing of God. It secures peace and safety. It seeks to establish immunity in the world against evil and misdeeds. But it may also become God's curse when wrongly used. The Holy Qur-án deals with it scientifically and on a psychological basis, converting the cause of enmity into a means for reconciliation and friendship. It says "And not alike are the good and the evil. Repel (evil) with what is best, when lo! he between whom and you was enmity would be as if he were a warm friend" (xli 34)

Anger has been implanted in our nature for the suppression of evil, but the reform of the wrongdoer is likewise a part of our duty. This problem has faced humanity from the very beginning. Different civilizations have adopted different ways to achieve this end. The Mosaic Dispensation taught the Law of Retribution, Jesus preached submission to evil. Both measures were timely, but not of general application. The former creates the spirit of revenge and anger, the latter is

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

enough to emasculate all manliness from us. But both dispensations were necessary when they were given. The Israelites were a race of slaves before the Exodus. The Lawgiver sought to make a martial race of the Children of Bondage and had, therefore, to promulgate the Law of Retribution, but in the course of time the followers of Moses came to forget mercy. They knew nothing but vengeance and anger at the time of Jesus. It was to reform them in this respect that he went to the other extreme.

To return evil with good is, no doubt, a beautiful maxim, but its universal application must needs, as things are at present, be harmful to the social fabric. It is putting a premium on evil. It encourages offence. It may produce reform in some cases, but it may also engender stubbornness and wickedness. But the law given in the Holy Qur-án meets all emergencies. "Repel evil with the best," is the Qur-ánic injunction. To amend wrong is the main object. If this can be obtained by forgiveness or by doing good, it is desirable, but if some coercive measure is needed it should be resorted to. We have to choose the best that suits the occasion. In chapter xlii the Holy Book speaks thus of the believers "37 And those who shun the great sins and indecencies, and whenever they are angry they forgive" "38 And their rule is to take counsel among themselves." "39 And those who, when great wrong afflicts them, defend themselves" "40 And the recompense of evil is punishment like it, but whoever forgives and amends, he shall have his reward from Allah, surely He does not love the unjust"

What beautiful and comprehensive teaching. Not only does it absorb into itself the Laws of Moses and of Jesus, but it also indicates the occasions proper for their application. It views the problem as a whole and lays down right principles for the suppression of evil on one hand and its reform on the other. Evil must be repelled at any cost, but we must not

## APPENDIX II

give way to anger, the best course is not to rely on our own judgment, when angry, but to take counsel with others. Forgiveness and punishment are both suggested. If amendment can be achieved through forgiveness, that is the best way, but nothing must be done at the expense of justice.

Anger is most readily aroused against a weaker class, for if such persons happen to commit a wrong it is easy enough to punish them. Here, then, is an occasion for controlling the passions, and the Book advises us in the following words: " (They hasten to forgiveness) who spend (benevolently) . . . and restrain anger and pardon men, and Allah loves the doers of good " (iii 133)

In the case of the weak ones we have not only to suppress our anger, but to forgive them their transgressions and then to be kind to them. This will make them attached to us, and they will not only have become reformed, but will also be our friends.

There is another verse which co-ordinates the proper use of desire and anger. It furnishes us with an ideal code of life and secures peace and well-being. It is read to Muslim congregations every Friday from the pulpit, and surpasses every teaching given elsewhere in Law or Religion.

" Surely Allah enjoins the doing of justice and the doing of good (to others) and the giving to the kindred, and He forbids indecency, the denial of other's rights and rebellion " (xvi. 90).

If the first part of the verse speaks of the three stages of goodness which the passion of *desire* in us, i.e. doing good to others, assumes, the other part deals with three forms of anger, which in a way, comprise every form of evil. The verse begins with justice. We must respect individual rights and pay to others their dues, that is the first form of goodness, without which no society can continue to exist. We must be charitable to others, as we are in the case of our kindred and



## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

pay them more than they deserve We must do good to them spontaneously out of our own accord Not only must we reward others according to their merits, but we must be benevolent to them, without regard to their merits This kind of benevolence partakes of God's Beneficence, Whose blessings come to us without our deserving them

The last part of the verse comprehends in three words the greater part of crime Anything that harms life, property, and name is styled "indecent," and we have been warned against it. But if this injury affects others, it amounts to a denial, on our part, of their rights, and has, therefore, been prohibited Those others, too, are entitled to protection as regards their own lives, property, and fame, and these we must respect. Anything that affects the whole of society, by violating its laws, is treated as rebellion in the Holy Qur-án. The Friday sermon gives its hearers the noblest of inspiration for acting as good citizens and doing their duty to society. We have to observe equity and justice in our dealings, to be charitable to others, to do no wrong to ourselves, to our fellow-men, or the community By obeying these injunctions we sublimate desire and anger to their most excellent forms and banish evil.

